YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

volume 1

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PREFACE TO THE 2ND EDITION

The first edition of this book, although poorly-printed, proved very popular and all copies were sold out in record time. Ayatullah Seyyid Mohammad Mahdi Al-Husaini Shirazi, Mujtahid (Kuwait), and other scholars highly appreciated the book. Some parts were reprinted in the Muslim Review, Madrasatul-Waezeen, Lucknow (India).

Encouraged by this the Mission is reprinting it by offset process on good-quality paper; the type-face is sure to please the discerning taste.

The first edition contained replies to 142 questions; but some replies only referred the questioner to some books or articles without conveying any detail. Such questions have been omitted from this edition, which now contains 131 replies.

Also, the first edition contained names of the correspondents which have been deleted from this edition, except where the name was thought necessary.

Our readers will be glad to learn that the second volume of this book is already in press; and the third volume has been compiled, and is expected to be published in 1976, Insha-Allah.

The mission is grateful to Mr Murtaza A. Bandali for his assistance in checking the proof.

Seyyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

DAR-ES-SALAAM

31st August, 1975.

Q1: What is Islam?

Joseph Mwambwa, Mombasa, Kenya.

A. Islam is to believe and accept that there is none to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger. It means that one MUST believe in and accept all that has been brought by Muhammad (s.a.w.w.). For details, see "Islam" obtainable from this Mission.

Q2: Why are you a Muslim?

A. I am a Muslim because I realise that: First of all, religion is the most essential thing to develop a man into a perfect human being. And secondly, I have come to the conclusion, after a thorough study of the world religions, that only Islam is the perfect, sensible and wellbalanced religion in the world.

Q3: What is the best religion in this world?

A. Islam is the only perfect religion in this world. See for details the booklet "Need of Religion" published by this Mission.

Q4: Who started the religion of Islam?

A. Islam is a religion which was originally brought in this world by Hazrat Adam (A.S.). All the prophets have been following the same religion (e.g. One God, Day of Resurrection, etc.) but the actual laws of religion differed from time to time depending upon the time of respective prophets. The last Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) brought the same religion, which is commonly known as 'ISLAM' today. There will be no Prophet after him. Therefore, Islam is the first and last religion, having been started by Hazrat Adam (A.S.) and perfected by our Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W.).

Q.5: What is the basis of faith and what role does it play in our lives?

A. About basis of faith: In our theology, Reason is the basis of faith. Here we differ completely from the Christianity whose motto is "First believe, then you will understand". But we say "First understand, then believe". The role which our faith plays in our lives is very comprehensive and prevalent. A Muslim's faith governs all his religious, ethical, social, and financial and family activities. It is not like Christianity in which the hold of religion on a Christian's life is limited to a few minutes of Sunday mornings when he attends the church.

Q.6;Where can I go to register myself as a Muslim and am I allowed to be a Muslim since I like the religion very much.

Miss Mary Oyoo, Mombasa, Kenya.

A. If you have studied the tenets of Islam and are convinced of its truth, there is no need to get your name registered anywhere. Islam is the only religion which establishes a direct relationship between a human being and God. There is no organised clergy or priest-hood as in Christianity; there is no forgiving of sins by priests; no dispensation and nothing to show that you depend on some human being for the salvation of your soul. If you are convinced about the truth of Islam and if you recite the following sentences with conviction, you are a Muslim without any need of any witness or priest or registration.

"I BEAR WITNESS THAT THERE IS NO GOD (OR NONE TO BE WORSHIPPED) EXCEPT ALLAH, AND I BEAR WITNESS THAT MUHAMMAD IS THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH".

Q7: What should we do if we want to be the most God-Fearing person?

A. The most God-fearing person these days is the one who obeys all the commands of God and abstains from all forbidden things.

Q.8: What should we do if we want to be the richest of people?

A. The richest person is he who is the most perfect in faith.

Q.9: What should we do if we want to be the faithful?

A. The faithful (i.e. مومن): Faith(ایمان) has been defined as "Firm belief, declaration by tongue and Actions according to the commands of Allah.

Q.10: Here I seek some question on Islam. I think of a man, who sincerely believes in all the fundamentals and professes them in words but he neither observes prayer nor performs pilgrimage. Would it be right to call him a true Muslim?

A. Your question concerns the relationship between 'Iman' and 'Good Deeds'. Iman is likened to a flame of a lamp, and worship of Allah and good deeds are like its light. The stronger the flame of the lamp, the brighter its light. Likewise, the stronger the Iman the better and more sincere the worship of Allah and more virtuous good deeds.

If a person is slow in worship and good deeds, it means that his Iman is weak.

If he does not worship Allah and performs no good deeds at all his claim of Iman is like a claim that lamp is burning while the whole room (walls, floor, roof, furniture) is absolutely dark.

Q.11: How many Muslims are in the World and where is the headquarter?

A. There is no authentic figure available. But it is estimated that there are between 650 and 750 million Muslims in the world.

There is no headquarter if you mean something on the lines of the Vatican. But the holy places of Islam are in Mecca and Medina (Saudi Arabia), Najaf, Kerbala, Kadhimain and Samarra (Iraq), Damascus (Syria) and Masjid-ul-Aqsa (Jerusalem).

Q.12: The other day my cousin asked me what proof have we got that Islam is the true religion. I told him that the Qur'an proves it. But he said that even Christians have Bible for their own proof. How should I reply him?

A. Your approach to that question was wrong and it gave your cousin the chance to object in the way he objected.

According to Shia Ithna-Asheri faith, the matters of belief (known commonly as Usul-e-Deen) must be understood through reason and intellect. When a person has accepted by logical reasoning that there is a Creator who is Omnipotent, Omni-scient, Omni-present; that He is Just and Loves His creatures; that because of that Justice and Love, He cannot leave mankind without a Guide; and that the Last of those guides was our Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) who brought Islam and Qur'an, then, and only then, may we argue with him on the strength of Qur'an and Hadith.

Otherwise, if he does not believe in God (or the Holy Prophet), you cannot expect him to

accept the verdict of Qur'an and Hadiths.

You have been sent 5 units of the Islamic Correspondence course. You may show them to your cousin and he may find the answer to his problems in them.

If after carefully reading those books, he wants more clarification, he or you may write to me,

Q.13: All religions believe in God. So do I. But where did God come from?

A. God did not come from anywhere. He is "Self-existent"; therefore, His existence cannot be limited by "from" and "to". He is forever.

Other things sometime exist, sometime do not exist. We may ask about these things "when" or "how" or "where from" did they come into being.

Q14: Does our Ithna-Asheri faith accept the theory of evolution, i.e., we were not created at an instant, but were evolved?

A. First let it be clear that our faith is based on the "belief in the Creator". If evolution means that Allah created different things in stages, there is not much conflict with religion. If, on the other hand, evolution means that there is no creator and that the things came into being just by progress of matter, then it is naked "Kufr" (atheism) and our faith cannot tolerate it even for an instant.

Q15: Does this verse support human evolution? *"And surely He has made you Fashion after Fashion".* (71:14).

A. The translation of ayat given by you is wrong. It is translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali as : "Seeing that it is He that has created you in diverse stages"

Mir Ahmad Ali translates it :- "While indeed He created you through regular stages."

And the meaning of "in diverse stages" or "through regular stages" is explained by Aimma (a.s.) as a reference to the various stages a foetus passes through, which has been shortly described in Qur'an (22 : 5) :-

"O' people! if you be in doubt about (your) rising again (resurrection), then (reflect ye that) verily We created you from dust, then from sperm, then from a clot, then from a lump of flesh, formed and (sometimes) partly unformed, that we may manifest (our power) unto you, and We cause to stay in the womb what We will until an appointed term, then bring ye forth as babes, then (foster you) that ye reach your maturity; and of you is he who is caused to die, and of you is he who is brought back to the feeblest (stage of) old age that he knoweth not aught after knowing (much)".

In another Ayat, it is described thus :-

"And indeed We created man, from an extract of clay. Then we made him sperm, in a firm resting place. Then made We the sperm a clot, then made We in the lump of flesh bones, then clothed We the bones with flesh; then We did grow it into another creation; so Blessed be God, the Best of the creators (23:13-15).

If you are interested to know the Islamic view of the hypothesis of evolution, you will find it explained in "Need of Religion" and "God of Islam", both published by this Mission.

Q.16: About how many years ago, Nabii Adam was created?

A. We have not been informed of it in the Traditions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) or Imams (A.S.).

Q.17: How can I be convinced that Allah was the God which Muhammad preached?

A. Well, open any page of the Qur'an and you will find the name "Allah" mentioned in it several times. Once a Hindu friend of mine happened to look at an English translation of the Qur'an and said, "It is safe to say that the key word of this book is "Allah"

The Kalema which the Holy Prophet preached contains the name "Allah" twice in the two short sentences. What more proof can anyone demand?

Q.18: Why does God exist?

A. Your question is misplaced. God is "Self-existent" therefore His existence cannot be questioned. Other things sometimes exist, sometimes do not exist; a few years ago you were not there, now you do exist; after some years your existence will come to an end. We may ask about such things why do they exist. There "being" needs a creator; without a force to cause them "to be" they cannot come into existence.

Therefore, it is quite right to ask the cause of the existence of other things; but God is Existence Himself and we cannot ask "why" does He exist.

Q.19: Why have we been created?

A. Allah says in the Qur'an :-

"And I did not create Jin and Human Beings but so that they worship me". The Maarifat (knowledge) of Allah and then obeying His Will and Command is included in the word "Worship"

Q.20: How far away from the earth is the moon?

A. The average distance of moon from the earth Is estimated to be 238,860 miles.

Q. 21: I believe God is nature; that means that nature is God. Is it right?

A. The answer is "NO" — Nature is a created thing and God is its Creaor. The two cannot be the same.

Q.22: I have been told that Nabii Elias went to the Heavens and is still awaited by the Jews. Is this also what we believe?

A. According to our Ahadith, Hazarat Elias is alive in this world, not in Heaven.

Q23: Is Hazrat Isa (A.S.) still alive or dead? If the former is the answer where is he?

A. Hazrat Isa (A.S.) is still alive and is in the heaven. He will return to earth before the day of

Resurrection to help Imam Mahdi (A.S.).

Q.24: Who was Muhammad? (S.A.W.W.)

A. He was son of Abdullah and Amina, from the clan of Hashim, tribe of Quraish, in Mecca. He was the Last of the Prophets sent by Allah to lead mankind onto the right path.

Q25: Where was Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) born, and where and when did he expire?

A. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) was born in Mecca in A.D. 570 and died in Medina in A.D. 632.

Q.26: How old was Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) when he first began to preach?

A. He was 40 years old when he announced his Prophethood.

Q.27: Our Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) got his spiritual power from God after reaching the age of 40, to preach Islam. Why not before, when there were other people who were worshipping idols during that time and also needed preaching of Islam.

A. It is wrong to say that "Our Holy Prophet got spiritual power from God after reaching the age of 40". He was Nabi even before the creation of Hazrat Adam (A.S.) you should say "He was allowed to preach when he reached the age of 40".

Why was he ordered to wait for such a long time? It was because Allah wanted the people of Arabia to see his character, truth, honesty, so that when he claimed that he was sent from Allah nobody could say (God forbid) was an untrustworthy person or an imposter.

In fact, the people of Mecca accused him of being a poet, a sorcerer or a bewitched man; but never could they accuse him of being untrustworthy. Even as they were planning to kill him, they used to keep their valuables with him in trust.

This trust and faith could not have been manifested had the Holy Prophet announced his Prophethood in his earlier life.

Q. 28: When we mention the apostle's name, Muhammad, we say (S.A.W.W.) Why? What does it mean?

A. (S.A.W.W.) after the name of the Holy Prophet is the abbreviation of "Sallallahu Alayhi wa Aalihi wa Sallam". It means, "May Allah Bestow His Mercy, Grace and Peace upon him (Muhammad) and his progeny" The Muslims say it in compliance with the command of Allah *:-"Verily, Allah Bestows His Grace upon the Prophet and His angels pray for him; O ye who believe send ye blessings on him and salute him as is the proper way"* (Qur'an; Sura 33, Ayat 56).

And the addition of "wa Aalihi" (and upon his progeny) is in accordance with the command of the Holy Prophet who said:

"Do not send on me an incomplete salawaat". The companions asked: “What is the incomplete salawaat, O Messenger of Allah!” The Holy Prophet said "It is incomplete to say "O Allah Bless Muhammad" and then to stop. Nay, you should say: "O Allah Bless Muhammad

and his Progeny". (Jawahirul-Iqdain; As-Sawaiqul-Muhriqua)

Q.29: Had the Prophet Muhammad any other names as we read in Christians' Bible that Jesus had other names as Christ, etc.?

A. Yes, He was referred to as "Ahmad" in his lifetime. And according to an authentic Hadith, he said: "I have five names, I am Muhammad, I am Ahmad, I am Hashir, I am Mahi, and I am Aaquib." Also, he is referred to as "Mustafa" (the chosen one).

Q. 30: How many wives Prophet Muhammad had besides Khadija? What are their names, if any?

A. The Holy Prophet did not marry any other woman in the life time of Khadija. After her death, he married 12 wives, nine of whom were alive at the time of his death. Their names were (1) Sauda (2) Aaisha (3) Umme Salma (4) Zainab binti Jahash (5) Safiyya (6) Hafsa (7) Maimuna (8) Zainab Ummul Masakin and (9) Umme Habiba.

Q31: He died as a Prophet, but where or in which country did he die and was buried?

A. He died at Medina and was buried there. Medina is in Hejaz, which nowadays is a part of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Q32: How old was Muhammad the Prophet when he died in 632 A.D, and when he started Islam?

A. The Holy Prophet died at the age of 63. He was 40 years old when he started preaching Islam.

Q33: Who buried him?

A. He was buried by Ali bin Abi Talib (cousin and son-in-law of the Holy Prophet) assisted by 3 family-members and two companions (Usama and Shaquran).

Q34: Did Muhammad the Prophet arise as Christ from the dead?

A. The Holy Prophet of Islam did not arise from the dead in the sense which you have in mind, nor did, for that matter, arise Christ. It is a long argument, and a short letter is not a place for this discussion.

Q35.Who wrote the Qur'an and in which year?

A. The Qur'an is not the work of any human being; it is the Revelation from Allah revealed to the Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.W.) So, you may say that Allah is the author of the Qur'an.

As soon as a revelation was received, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) used to dictate it to one of the official Scribes. The Qur'an was revealed during 23 years between 610 and 632 A. D.

Q36: I would like to know the languages into which the Qur'an has been translated?

A. The Qur'an has been translated in more than 100 languages. It is difficult to give a list of them. The Qur'an has been translated into almost all the languages of Asia and Europe.

Q37: Is it a sin reading the Bible?

A. Well, the Bible is a collection of Old Testament and New Testament. First five books of old Testament are said to have been written by Hadrat Musa (A.S.), but in fact, the books were compiled 1000 years after Hadhrat Musa (A.S.). The New Testament is named "The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ", but not a single book is claimed to have been written by him. And the authorship of even 4 gospels is shrouded into obscurity and nobody is sure who was, for example, the author of the 4th Gospel. Therefore, if you read Bible with a belief that these books are authentic, true and written by the prophets to whom they are attributed, it will be wrong.

Also, if your knowledge of the alterations, misinterpretations,, forgeries and additions of the Bible is not complete, you should not read them as they may create confusion in your mind.

On the other hand, if you have adequate knowledge of Islam, and a fair idea of the background of the Bible as I have mentioned above, you may read it. I advise you to read our book "Qur'an and Hadith" which will give you some idea about the compilation of the Bible.

Q38: What is Sura Yaasin' generally held to signify?

A. "Sura Yasin" is said to be 'the heart of the Qur'an'. It exhorts the faithful in many ways to abstain from Satanic schemes and to wholeheartedly follow the right Path shown by Allah through His last Prophet Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa (S.A.W.W.).

Q39: Who succeeded as Caliph after Muhammad?

A. The Muslims became divided into two groups : The bigger group following Abu Bakr, the other following Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.).

For details see "Imamat" which is available from this Mission.

Q.40: A certain community believes to such an extent that Hazrat Ali (A.S.) is greater than the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) and probably as great as God. I shall be extremely obliged if you will please supply me with necessary text and satisfactory explanation so that this absurd notion could be checked.

A. It will help a great deal if I make one thing clear at the start. According to their belief, Hazrat Ali (A.S.) was god; and this "hereditary god-ship" has now come to the present Aga Khan IV. And their constitution says that whenever and wherever the words "Hazrat Ali", "Maula Ali", "Imam Hussain", etc., are used the real meaning is "the present Aga Khan".

Their Kalema says: "Ameerul-Momeneen Ali Allah", i.e. "Ameerul-Mome-neen Ali is Allah". (The English and Gujarati translations have been twisted to hide their actual belief from others. The translation (quite wrongly) is given as "Ali is From Allah".)

What all the declarations mentioned in your letter boil down to is that H. H. Aga Khan IV is the god; he is superior to the Holy Prophet of Islam; he can change the sheriat.

"Hazrat Ali' is not Ali bin Abi Talib" but H. H. Aga Khan IV; their 'Imam' is not a successor to the

Holy Prophet but a god; their 'book' is not the Qur'an, but the ginan; and their Ibadat is not that of the general Muslims, but some secret rites of their own. Therefore, even when they use the words 'Imam' or 'sheriat' they mean the things which are quite different from the Imam or sheriat as known to us. Consequently, when the words, used by the arguing parties, are used for different meanings, the argument can never come to an end.

Therefore, you should not worry too much about such "absurd notions".

So, if, according to them, Hazrat Ali was god, he naturally would be superior to the Holy Prophet; La Haula wala Quwwata Ilia Billah.

In fact, the claim that "Hazrat Ali was greater than the Holy Prophet" is just rubbish. Hazrat Ali spent every moment of his life obeying the commands given to him by the Holy Prophet; his fondest claim was that he was the first to follow the footsteps of the Holy Prophet. His lectures and letters in 'Nahjul-Balaghah' are full of such references for the whole world to see.

So, according to his own claims, Hazrat Ali was a follower, helper, and successor of the Holy Prophet. He himself never claimed more than that. Any body claiming any thing else has the responsibility to prove it from the books known to the Muslims.

Imam Raza (A.S.) has explained the cause of their misunderstanding in a lengthy Hadith, a gist of which will not be out of place here. Imam (A.S.) said that "these astray unbelievers" did not get this idea into their brain but because they overestimated the value of their own selves. This led them to believe whatever got into their brains without seeking guidance from the representatives of Allah. This continued and in the end "they belittled the honour of Allah and thought nothing of His dignity and degraded His great prestige, as they did not know that Allah is the Omnipotent Himself, "Ghani" (Above every need) Himself, that His Power is not borrowed (from someone else) nor is His Wealth to be exhausted"

"Then they looked to a servant of Allah whom He had given some special powers to show his nearness with Him...

Then the Imam (A.S.) gives the example of some people who sought an audience with a certain King and were told that the King would pass in a procession with all his knights and nobles through that avenue. They were also told that when they saw the King, they were to bow down and show their allegience to him; and also that they were not to include anybody else in that courtesy.

"They promised to do accordingly. Then, lo, there came a knight of the King resplendent in the court robes and armour. These people thought that must be the King. They saluted him like the King, and even when he said that he was just a servant of the King they refused to listen — because they did not know the splendour of the King. They were dazed with the entourage of the Knight and said that nobody could be above him.

"They, inspite of the warnings given them by the said Knight and other persons, persisted in their folly. Then the King reached there, saw their infidelity and ordered them to be imprisoned and punished.

"Likewise, when these "Ghulat" saw Hazrat Ali — a servant of Allah who was raised in dignity by Allah — they thought Allah too small to have a servant like Ali, and considered Ali too big to have any Lord and God. They called him by a name which was not his (i.e. they called him "Allah"). Hazrat Ali and his followers forbade them (from this belief) and said : "O people, Ali and his children are the honourable servants of Allah but they are created and they have no power except that which has been given them by Allah, the Lord of the Universe; and they possess nothing except that which has been bestowed upon them by Allah; and they do not have any power about death, life or resurrection, nor on any closing or opening, nor on any movement or stillness except that which has been given to them by Allah, and that their Lord and Creator is above all the attributes of the creatures, and that anybody who thinks about

them (or about any of them) that they are gods, then he is unbeliever (kafir) and has gone astray from the right path".

"But these people refused to listen and revolted against Allah and blindly continued in their rebellion. In the end their hopes (with Allah) were shattered and their aim remained unfulfilled and they got their punishment from Allah"

In fact, such ideas, were propagated by a certain Abul-Khattab during the days of Imam Jaffer Sadique (A.S.) Imam (A.S.) cursed him and ordered the Shias not even to talk to him as he had become "Mushrik" (poly-theist).

Mr. Hollister says that Mohammed s/o Ismail s/o Imam Jafer Sadique (A. S.) used to befriend him despite the above mentioned "Lanat" and became influenced by his ideas.

Such people are called "Ghali" (pi. "Ghulat"), i.e. the people who claim such virtues for Nabi or Imam which are not theirs, like godship, creation, etc.

Other group was called "Mufawwidha" (Delegators). They believed that Allah created Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) and Ali (A.S.) and delegated all His powers to them. So, it is they who created and sustained (Rizk) the world.

When somebody told Imam Jafer Sadique (A.S.) about this belief, Imam told him to go to him and recite this Ayat of the Qur'an : *"Or do they assign to Allah partners who have created anything as He has created, so that the creation seemed to them similar? Say, Allah is the Creator of all things, He is the One, the Supreme and Irresistible"*. (Qur'an, 13:16)

When the said man went to him and recited this Ayat, he could not reply and remained as though his mouth was filled with stones".

And, if inspite of all these things, somebody still claims that Hazrat Ali (A.S.) was god, he should be reminded of Sura Tauhid :

“Say Allah is one Allah, having no need (or imperfection); He did not beget (anyone) and was not begotten (by anyone); and there was none equal to Him".

Hadhrat Ali (A.S.) was begotten by Abu Talib and Fatima binti Asad; he himself begot 35 children. He needed food and drink; he needed rest and sleep; he married; he was born and was martyred.

Allah says in the Qur'an, refuting the belief of godship of Hazrat Isa (A.S.), that he used to eat food. Eating and drinking show the 'need' to sustain the body by replacing its spent cells which in its turn shows the constant change' (Need and change both being impossible for Allah). So, taking food shows that Hazrat Isa (A.S.) was not God, Does not this very argument show that Hazrat Ali (A.S.) also was not God?

It will not be out of place to mention that H. H. Agakhan III had written a book, "Khoja Qaum na Mazhab na Ketlak Mul Tatwo tatha kirya sam-bandhi nano Pustak", in which he described the faith and sheriat which was to be followed by the Khojas. There he gives his own designation as "Khoja no Peer". In that booklet, he says that, God is not surrounded by anything; He is not made of anything neither he has begotten anyone; nor was He begotten by anyone".

Was it not strange that after describing such attributes for God in 1894, he claimed godship for himself in 1908 as can be seen from the judgement of Haji Bibi case. Surely, he was surrounded by so many things including his living place, his clothes and what not; he was made of flesh, bone, etc.; he was the son of his parents and father of many children. And still he is thought to be a god !

Here I should quote another Hadith of Imam Raza (A.S.) which very thoroughly shows the fallacy of such ideas :-

Our 8th Imam once described the attributes of Allah. A man said that he knew a certain person who claimed to be a Shia and believed that all these attributes belonged to Hazrat Ali (A.S.) and that he was the God, the Lord of the Universe.

When Imam (A.S.) heard it he trembled (with the fear of God) and said : "Allah is above all things which people believe to be a Sharik (partner) of him; Allah is high above all such talks of the "Kafirs". Was not Ali eating as others ate, and drinking (water) as others drank and marrying as others married, and was not he subject to all needs of body as others were? And, moreover, he was praying humbly, showing humility before God, and was turning with his body and soul towards God. Can a person with such attributes thought to be God? And, if he was God, then there is none among you who is not god, because all of you share with Hazrat Ali these attributes (which are in fact ample proofs that the person concerned is a creature not a creator)".

Here I should mention an episode of about 1000 years ago.

A man during the Ghaibat-e-Sughra claimed that the 12 Imams were gods, and that he was their prophet. Husain bin Rauh (A.R.) declared that that man was claiming the Imams to be god, so that he could pave the way for his own godship, by claiming at a later day that the Imam's soul had been incarnated in his own body.

And it happened as predicted. So, you see, such people who have been led to believe in godship of any of the Imams are like toys in the hands of those who use them for their own purpose.

And the purpose can be seen in the Translation of their old Dua (now out of print) which is given by Justice Russel in the famous Haji Bibi case, and which runs as follows :-

"True declaration — God is Holy, Thanks to God. Praise to God. There is no God but God. God is great. There is no might or power except that of God, the High, the Great, the Merciful, the Magnanimous, the God, the Great Holy Providence (who is) in the district of Chaldea, in Persia, in human form, descended from the seventy-seven Patras (ancestors) and Who is the forty-eighth Imam (Spiritual Chief), the tenth Naklanki Avtar, our Master, Aga Sultan Mahomed Shah, the Giver. Then you are to prostrate. Then say 'Hak Shah' (i.e. O Shah, Thou art true)."

Q41: They also argue that the Imam can change the "Furu" and not the "Usul" of Islam.

A. So far as the Ismailis are concerned, their "Imam" means "god" And god can do whatever he likes ! The Sheriat of the Holy Prophet was perfected by Allah during the days of the Holy Prophet. See Sura Maida where it says :

"Today I made perfect your religion for you, and completed my Blessing upon you..."

This Sheriat is upto Qiyamat and is not to be changed or cancelled. The Holy Prophet has said : The 'Halal" of Muhammad is "Halal" upto Qiyamat and "Haram" of Muhammad is "Haram" upto Qiyamat.

The Imams elaborated it and made it clear, but they were not to change it. The Ismailis believe that the Sheriat was cancelled by one of the ancesors of H.H. Aga Khan, Hasan Ala Dhikrihissalam (the great-grandson of Hassan bin Sabbah) who ruled in the Castle of Almut from 1162 A.D. to 1166 A.D. During this short reign in a month of Ramadhan (on 17th) he went on 'Mimber' and declared that from then on the Sheriat was cancelled; ordered his followers to break their fast which they promptly did by eating, drinking and merry-making. One of their poets praises it in the following lines:

برداشت غل شرع بتائید ایزدی
ازگردن زمانه علی ذکره السلام

“Hasan Ala Dhikrihissalam removed the fetters of the Sheriat from the neck of the people by the grace of God’’.

So that is their real tenet and belief for the last 8 centuries. Whenever they pose themselves as abiding to the rules of Sheriat as in Pakistan or India. (or very recently in East Africa), it is just for the sake of politics so that they may not be despised by the Muslim Community.

Q42: The same community also argued that Imam Hasan (A. S.) was not given Imamat because Hazrat Ali (A.S.) knew that Imam Hasan's descendants were not to survive, and, therefore, the Imamat was given direct to Imam Husain (A.S.).

A. This trash is worse than the talk of the pagans of Mecca who claimed that our Holy Prophet was "Abtar" (without any descendant). The pagans according to their own way of life, thought that claim to be justified, because they did not give any importance to a daughter, and, the Holy Prophet's sons did not survive.

But the Ismailis' talk is worse than that because Imam Hasan (A.S.) had at least 8 sons and 7 daughters. Out of those 8 sons, the descendants of two (Zaid and Hasan Muthanna) are still found in thousands and thousands. (Vide the books of Ansab-e-Aal-e-Abi Talib).

Our last Mujtahid, Marhum Aqua Sayyid Mohsin Al Hakeem Tabatabai, was one of them. And their genealogy is not in dispute like that of Hasan Ala Dhikrihissalam who happens to be among the ancestors of H. H. Aga Khan, and who was a descendant of Hasan bin Sabbah (admittedly a Persian of non-Arab origin). Justice Arnold in his famous judgement of Khoja case (1866 A.D.) (of which H. H. Aga Khan II was very proud and wrote that the said judgement "established" the position of Aga Khan 1) had also established the lineal descent of Hasan Ala Dhikrihissalam from Hassan bin Sabbah.

And while we are on this subject, we might better mention that at least upto 1866 A.D, Imam Hasan (A.S.) was believed by the Ismailis to be the 2nd Imam.

Mr. Justice Arnold, in the said judgement gives the list of the first seven Imams, according to the belief of the Ismailis and mentions Imam Hasan (A.S.) as the second Imam.

But Justice Russel in Haji Bibi Case (1908) says about Imam Hasan (A.S.) that he was a peer, not an Imam.

The question is when was the name of Imam Hasan (A.S.) dropped from this list and who omitted it and why?

Q43: I have been told that after we die, we still feel pain if someone touches us. But as the soul has left the body (after our death) how can we feel pain? Because we feel pain because we are alive, (that is because have soul).

A. The body does not feel anything; but the soul feels the pain if the body is mishandled just as the parents are pained to see their child mishandled though they themselves are not touched. As the soul remained in that body, it developed a kind of attachment with it which causes this feeling of pain even after being removed from it.

Q44: If a man knows nothing about Qur'an nor about praying and he is a Muslim and if he fasts, does he get any "God's Reward" or not and why?

A. If a Muslim knows nothing about the Qur'an nor about prayers but keeps the fast during the month of Ramadhan properly, he will get "Reward" of fasting but will be punished for his neglect of prayers.

Q45.We believe that our 12th Imam is alive but he is "Ghayab". We also believe that when our Prophet died, he left two things to guide us, namely Qur'an and Ahlul-bait. Till 11th Imam, two things were going along together. Now, we have Qur'an but why not our Imam in person?

A.

1. You say that this question was asked by the Ismailis. What right these people have to quote this Hadith of the Holy Prophet when their 48th Imam expressly told them to forget about Qur'an because it was 1300 years old and was in Arabic; they were ordered to follow, instead, the Ginan which was in an Indian language and only 500 years old?
2. There is a difference between the Qur'an (which can be found in every house) and the Imam (who naturally would be in a certain place).Thus even in normal conditions the Imam would not be available to everyone everywhere.
3. At least since the days of 6th Imam, the work of Tabligh was done through the authorised "Wakils" (agents). The system was perfected during the Imamat of Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.) and is still working.
4. Since the inception of that system, it was made clear to all the Shias that they were to approach those "Wakils". Our present Imam (A.S.) has clearly ordained in numerous letters to all the Shias before the start of the "Ghaibat" that, thenceforth, his Shias were to approach the scholars of religion, because "they are my representatives for you, and I am the Representative of Allah for them; anyone who rejects their words rejects my words, and whoever rejects my words rejects the words of Allah and whoever rejects the words of Allah would go into the Fire (of Jahannam)".
5. Of course, "Ghaibat" has made a difference. Previously, the representatives of Imam had a liberty to ask his guidance even on minor things, even If those things were already fully explained by previous Imams or the same Imam. Now that liberty is lost. Our present Imam (A.S.) still guides the scholars, BUT ONLY WHEN THE MATTER OR THE QUESTION IS SUCH WHICH WAS NOT CLEARED PREVIOUSLY. If any previous Imam or Alim has already thrown light on that question, the present Imam remains silent and lets the scholars find the answer by their own research. But if the question is a new one and the Alim is unable to solve it by himself Imam (A.S.) invariably always guides the Ulama in that respect. I could have given you many examples of which I am personally aware, but I am not at liberty to narrate them.

So, you may rest assured that our 12th Imam (A.S.) personally guides the Shias through those who have achieved spiritual perfection and whom he guides whenever It is necessary.

Q46: Can we have a direct contact with our Imam?

A. Yes. If any Ithna-Asheri is really anxious to meet him (A.S.) personally, he should spend 40 Tuesday nights at Masjid-e-Sahla (near Kufa), or 40 Thursday nights (Shab-e-Juma) at the grave of Imam Husain (A.S.) in prayers and remembrance of Allah. At the end of that period

he will surely see and meet the Imam (A.S.).

Q47: Can you, please; direct us with reference to Qur'an when, why and where our Imam was "Ghayab"?

A.

1. When and Where? Well, what is the use of seclusion if people are made aware of his "whereabouts"? So, the question "Where" cannot be answered if you mean "where is he?". But if you mean "where was he living at the time of Ghaibat?", then I may tell you that he became Ghayab from "Samarra" in the year 329 Hijrah.
2. Why? Here is a Hadith from Imam Jafer Sadique (A.S.) explaining about Ghaibat some 200 years before that event :-

   Abdullah bin Fadhl heard Imam Jafer Sadique (A.S.) talking about the "seclusion" and its long period in which every man of wrong belief would start doubting (even the existence of Sahib-ul-Amr). Abdullah asked the reason of ghaibat, to which Imam replied :

   "The reason of his "Ghaibat" is the same as of the ghaibat of other representatives of Allah before him.Verily its reason will not be clear until after his re-appearance; as the reason of the actions of Khidhr (i.e. damaging the boat, killing the child and repairing the wall) was not explained to Musa (A.S.) until the time came for them to separate. O Son of Fadhl, this is an Amr from Amr of Allah, a secret from the secrets of Allah, and hidden thing from the hidden things of Allah; and when we know that Allah is Hakeem (Creator of wisdom) we confirm that all of his actions are based upon wisdom though its reason at the time might be unclear to us.(Ihtijaj, Volume II, p. 140).

   So, you see that the actual reasons cannot be known till our Imam (A.S.) ends his seclusion. Then, we will know the facts.

Still, the following reasons which have been mentioned in the Hadith of Imams right from Ameerul-Momeneen upto our present Imam (A.S.) will throw some light on this question of 'Ghaibat' :-

1. He is in seclusion so that when he stands to put the world on right path, he is not bound by an oath of allegiance to anybody.
2. Safety of his life.
3. Testing the strength of the Iman of believers, as was done in the case of Hadhrat Nuh (A.S.) when the coming of the flood was repeatedly postponed and each postponement saw many so-called 'faithfuls' deserting Hadhrat Nuh (A.S.) and becoming kafir.

You have not put "How" in your question; but I think I should reply this question also, to make the picture clearer. Ghaibat does not mean that our Imam has got an invisible body. The meaning of Ghaibat is that people, even when he is among them, do not recognise him. Here is a Hadith from Imam Jaffer Sadique (A.S.) on this subject :-"And why do these people think it strange? Verily, the brothers of Yusuf were Asbat — the children of the prophets — they made business transaction with Yusuf, and bought things from him and talked with him and they were his brothers and he was their brother — and they did not recognize him until Yusuf told them, "I am Yusuf". So why does this cursed Ummat reject the idea that at a certain time Allah may want to hide his Representative.

Surely, Yusuf was the ruler of Egypt (and, thus, a famous man) and there was between him and his father a distance of only 18 days journey and had Allah wanted to reveal to Yakub

where Yusuf was, He had power to do so (By God, when they got the good news of Yusuf, Yakub and his children covered that distance in 9 days only).So, why does this Ummat think it objectionable if Allah wanted to do with His Representative what He did in case of Yusuf, i.e. the 12th Imam may be visiting their markets, walking on their floors and yet they would not recognize him till Allah allows him to disclose his personality, as He did to Yusuf when he said, "And did you know what you did with Yusuf and his brother when you were ignorants?". They said, "Say, Art thou Yusuf?" He said, "I am Yusuf and this is my brother"(Biharul-Anwar Vol. 13)

So far as the question of long life on this earth is concerned the following Ayat about Hazrat Yunus is to the point: *"And, verily, Yunus is from among the Apostles; when he fled to the boat. And had he not been from those who say the Tasbih, he would have stayed in its stomach till the day when they would be resurrected"*

This ayat clearly shows that but for his Tasbih, Yunus would have stayed in the stomach of the fish till Qiyamat. Then what is strange if a man stays on the earth till Qiyamat?

Then there is the long life of Hadhrat Nuh. According to Qur'an, he preached to his people, before cursing them, for 950 years. Then came the Flood and he lived long after the Flood. In all he lived 2500 years. Compare it with the age of our present Imam which at this time is 1132 years only and you will not see any cause for objection.

Q48:What is the main difference between Islam and Christianity?

George Chiteri, Mombasa, Kenya.

A. In this connection, first let me explain that, according to Islamic belief, Jesus Christ was a prophet sent by God to guide the children of Israel unto the right path. His Prophethood continued till the arrival of Muhammad, (S.A.W.W.) the Last Prophet sent by God.

Thus Islam and Christianity both have come from the same source; but the difference is that Christianity was for a specific tribe and for a specific period, while Islam has come for all mankind for upto the last day of the world.

By the passage of time many such things had crept into Christianity which had made it necessary to send anotner Prophet to remove those wrong ideas and beliefs. For Example :-

1. The Muslims believe that there is only one God. The Christians, while claiming to have the same belief, actually believe in 3 gods : God, Christ and Holy Ghost. They want to reconcile both their claims by saying that these 3 are 'one' and at the same time '3'. How this strange arithmetic is believed is beyond comprehension. They say that first you believe it then you can understand it.
2. The Muslims believe as they have been taught in Qur'an :-

   "Say, He is God, The One and Only; God, the Eternal, Absolute; He be-getteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him".

   The Christians believe that God begot a son who was Jesus Christ. Thus God became a father. And as Christ also is a god and he is called "the son of god", so god became a son also.

   How God became father of Jesus is not explained. The only argument is that Jesus was born without father, so Allah was his father.

   To this claim, the Qur'an replies :-

   "The example" of Jesus before God is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, "Be" and he was"

If Jesus can be claimed to be "son of God" because he had no father, Adam has far stronger claim to be the son of God because he had neither father nor mother.

3. The Muslims believe that every man is responsible for his own actions. No man will be punished for other's sin. Qur'an says, *"that no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another"*

   The Christians on the other hand believe that as Nabi Adam ate from the tree in Jannat, he committed a sin; and that sin has been inherited by every human-being; thus every person is born with that sin and will be punished for it.

   It is also diametrically opposed to the Muslims belief that all children are born free from every sin and disbelief.

4. Resulting from No. 3, the Christians believe that it was to remove that sin from mankind that Jesus Christ died on the cross. Now anyone, believing that Jesus Christ died on the cross for atonement of the sins of mankind, will automatically become free from every sin and thus will be saved from punishment.

   Muslims emphatically refute this belief, because it is based on the wrong and illogical assumption of the "original sin" of Nabi Adam.

5. Christians believe that one of their gods (i.e. Jesus Christ) died and again became alive after 3 days.

   The Muslims' God is the Creator of death and life. Death cannot reach him.

Resulting from these differences, many, other differences have arisen. But I think this much is enough for this letter.

Q 49: Is Islam related in anyway with the Chritianity?

A. You have asked about the relationship between Islam and Christianity. Being a Muslim, you must be aware that Allah sent 124,000 prophets beginning with Hadhrat Adam (A.S.) and ending with our Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W.). All these prophets came from Allah and brought His message. As they all came from one Allah, their basic faith (e.g. Unity of God, His Mercy and Justice, the Day of Judgement, etc.,) was always the same. But the rules of prayers, of family system, etc., etc., changed according to the needs of the time. Consequently, five new sheriats were sent one after another through Hadhrat Nuh, Ebrahim, Musa, Isa and Muhammad Mustafa (peace of Allah be on them). Every later sheriat abrogated and cancelled the previous one. Thus, the sheriat of Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa (S.A.W.W.) cancelled the sheriat of Hadhrat Isa (A.S.) and all the previous sheriats.

In this background you may easily understand the relationship between these two religions; Islam and Christianity both came from the same source, but Islam was sent to cancel all the previous religions including Christianity.

Q50: What is the message of Islam to the non-Muslims?

A. The message of Islam to the non-Muslims is found in the following ayat of the Holy Qur'an:-

"Say, O People of the Book, come on the word agreed between us and you; that we shall worship none but Allah and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him and that none of us shall take others for lords besides Allah". (Ale-Imran : 64).

Q51: Why is Islam and Ahmadiyyas not same in their beliefs?

A. Here also there are many differences; but the basic differences are as follows :-

1. Muslims (without exception) believe that Hadhrat Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) is the Last Prophet. No prophet is ever to come after him.

   The Ahmadiyyas (commonly known as Qadianis) believe that Mirza Ghu-lam Ahmad of Qadian (died in 1908 A. D.) was prophet.

2. The Muslims believe that Imam Mahdi will re-appear before Qiyamat and that Hadhrat Isa (A.S.) will come as one of his followers to help him. The Qadianis believe that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani was Imam Mahdi and Nabi Isa — all in one, like the "3-in-1" god of the Christians.

3. The Qadiani's belief about angels and Satan appears to be quite different from the belief of the Muslims.

There are other differences which it is not possible to explain in a short letter.

Q52: I am really confused about my attitude towards the Ahmadiyya Sect. What should my standpoint be? Is it merely a dissident group which differs in its opinions as to the interpretation of certain Islamic beliefs or do its contentions differ fundamentally with the basic Islamic tenets? And if so how should we (Muslims) regard them?

A. Ahmadias (commonly known as Qadianis) differ with the Muslims in many of the basic tenets, the most important one being the finality of Prophethood.

Also they do not believe in 'Malaika,' and resurrection of the dead. There are many items in religion which are called "Dharuriyaat-e-Deen", i.e., such Basic Tenets which are known to every Muslim as part of religion. Take for example, the 5 times prayers, Fast of Ramadhan, Hajj of Kaaba, etc.

If any person rejects even one of Dharuriyaat-e-Deen, he according to the unanimous belief of the Muslims, becomes Kafir, though he may be reciting "La Ilaha Illallah Muhammadun Rasulullah".

The belief that our Holy Prophet was the last Prophet and no other prophet is to come after him, is one of the Dharuriyaat-e-Deen. Anybody or any sect rejecting this belief is Kafir.

(For details, see "Muhammad Is The Last Prophet" published by this Mission.)

No. 53: ("Note: This letter was sent to Mr. Jamifur Rahman Rafiq, Chief Missionary of Ahmadiya Mission of Kenya, Nairobi. No reply was ever received).

"During the Agricultural Society Show of Mombasa you told some Shia youths that Abdul Hamid bin Abil-Hadid (who wrote one of the commentaries of Nahjul-Balagha) was Shia.

When I asked you whether you had seen that commentary, you told me that you had not seen it but that you depended upon a book prepared by your headquarters in which he is mentioned as Shia.

I gave you an old issue of the "Light" (March-June, 1967) in which your claim that Ibn Abil-Hadid was Shia had been shown to be completely against his own declarations.

For your information, we have in our Mission's Library the Mash-hadi edition of Nahjul-Balagha; and I have in my personal library all 20 volumes of the Sharh of Nahjul-Balagha by

Ibn Abil-Hadid; and our Mombasa library has the Egyptian edition of Nahjul-Balagha (with foot notes by Mufti Mohammad Abduh).

You are welcome to see all or any of the above editions at any time.

Then you showed me an Arabic writing in the same book of yours purporting to be a letter of Ameerul-Mumineen Ali bin Abi Talib, some of whose sentences praised the First and Second Caliphs as 'Siddique' and 'Farooque'.

The writer of your book has given the reference of Nahjul-Balagha. When you showed me that writing I knew that it was not in Nahjul-Balagha. Still I wanted to check your reference once more and I copied the said "quotation".

Now, I have checked the whole book and no such or similar paragraph is in Nahjul-Balagha.

Now you have two tangible items to check the reliability of your writers :

(a)They wrote that Abdul-Hameed Ibn Abil-Hadid was Shia — while he himself writes in the same book that he was a Mutazilite and propounds the beliefs of Baghdadi Mutazilites from the beginning of his book to the end.

(b)They claim a "quotation" to be from "Nahjul-Balagha" while there is no such wording in Nahjul-Balagha.

If your writers can mislead you so blatantly in matters which can easily be checked what trust can you put in them in other matters?

Q54: I write this letter in reply to your advertisement in the Uganda Argus of 13th November, 1969. I am a student of Islam at Makerere University College and at present I am faced with many unanswered questions, theological, historical and others about Islam. For example, "Western critics claim that Sufism was borrowed from Christianity or other religions outside Islam"' and not within Islam itself.

I am not satisfied by answers given by my lecturer in Islamics, partly due to the fact that he is a Christian and also his knowledge is western orientated.

I am also interested, and have been thinking for some time on the following topic :-

"ISLAM AND NOT MOHAMEDANISM".

Therefore, I shall be most grateful if you send me literature (free or otherwise) so that I could get answers to my questions and also defend my religion Islam from some pamphleteers and critics.

A. So far as Sufism is concerned, it is almost certain that it was borrowed from the sources outside of Islam. Muhaddith Dehlavi was of the opinion that first Sufis were from Kharijites. Others trace its origin to Hasan Basri who, undoubtedly, was against Ali bin Abi Talib, a fact which must be remembered in view of the later generations' assertion that he got his training from Ali.

I think the point of contention is not that whether Sufism sprung from within Islam or it was imported from outside. The only point of argument is whether it was borrowed from Christianity or Hinduism.

I think that both groups are partially right, because Sufism has taken something from both.

Your idea of "Islam and NOT Muhammadanism" is quite right. Islam is the religion which was

brought by all the prophets beginning from Hadhrat Adam (A.S.) and ending with Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa (S.A.W.W.). All the prophets and apostles brought the same faith (e.g., Unity of God, His Mercy and Justice, Day of Judgement, etc. Etc.). Of course, their Sheriats concerning mode of prayer, family system, penal code, etc., etc., were changing in response to the maturity of humanity; but the basic faith was never changed.

Therefore, to give Islam the name of "Muhammadanism" is very misleading and absolutely wrong. Islam was and is the Religion of Allah, not of Muhammad (S.A.W.W.).

I hope this will be sufficient to your needs.

Q55: Can a Sunni Muslim pray with Ismailis or Bohras in the same Mosque?

Bukere Suleman, Entebbe (Uganda)

A. I am not aware whether the Ismailis or Bohras will allow you to enter Jamat Khanas or mosques during prayer time.

Moreover, Ismailis do not pray like other Muslim Sects. They have an entirely different way of "Bandagi" which has no resemblance with Muslims' prayers.

Q56: Explain why Ismailism is a complete way of life?

Miss Minaz S. Hassan, Kampala, (Uganda).

A. It would have been better if you had put this question to the Ismaili hierarchy. This question presupposes that Ismailism is a complete way of life and you just want to know how is that so. Now, as it happens, we cannot, in good conscience, concur with you in that supposition. We know that Islam established the dignity of mankind by rejecting all the ideas of human worship, nature worship or idol worship. (You better read 'Islam' pp. 3-5). So if any group, calling itself a sect of Islam, cultivates the idea that God was incarnated in a certain person, and thus demands the prerogatives of God for that human being, that group brings the human dignity down to the stage of sub-humanity. Such a faith cannot be termed as a complete way of life.

I am afraid I may have offended your feelings. In fact, the main cause of delay in replying to your question was that I did not like to give you a shock, but on the other hand, I felt obliged to give the reply as you have sought our help in this matter of religion.

I would not go into the details of my reply at this stage, but if you want some details and quotations, please write to me again and I will supply the required information.

Q57: What is the difference between Shia and Sunni sects of Islam?

A. You may refer to a cyclostyled article 'Sects of Islam' published by this Mission which will give you a fairly comprehensive idea of all the differences. If there is anything more which you want to be explained fully, please write to me without hesitation. (now that article is published as an Appendix of 'Your Questions Answered', Vol. 2, available from this Mission).

Q58: What is the difference between Shia and Ithna-Asheri?

A. The word 'Shia' is from Arabic word. 'At —Tashayyo which means to follow. This word has been used for the followers of the Prophets of Allah in the Holy Qur'an.

"And verily among his (Noah's) Shias (followers) is Ibrahim" (Qur'an 37 : 83).

We are called Shia because we follow the Holy Prophet according to the way shown by

Hazrat Ali (A.S.) and other sinless members of the family of the Holy Prophet.

In fact, it was the Holy Prophet himself who named followers of Hazrat Ali (A.S.) as Shia. The famous Sunni Scholars, Allamah Ibn Hajar (in his book "As-Sawaiqul-Muhriqua") and Allamah Ibn Athir (in his book 'Nihaya') recorded that the Prophet said : "O Ali, verily thou wilt come in the presence of Allah,thou and thy Shias happily and Allah will be pleased with you".

'Ithna-Asher' is the Arabic for 'twelve'. As we believe in 12 Imams after the Holy Prophet, hence this name.

No. 59:

The following letter was written in reply to some questions sent by Sheikh Omar Schubert Al-Muhtadi, Vice-President of Islamic Community in Hamburg, (West) Germany.

RULES OF SHIA SHERIAT CONCERNING PERSONAL HYGIENE

(a) AFTER URINATING :

1. It is wajib to wash the organ TWO times, with pure and Tahir Water. The organ cannot be Tahir except by water.
2. ISTIBRA: It is a device to make sure that no drops of urine have remained in the male organ. It is not wajib; but still is very much necessary. The standard method is to :

   (a) Press a finger near the beginning of the urine-passage at the bottom and rub it upward three times upto the testicles.

   (b)Likewise, put finger at the root of penis and rub the urine-passage from the root upto the tip three times;

   (c)Then, shake the penis three times to make sure that all urine has gone out,

   (d)Also at the time of shaking it, put pressure on it by coughing gently.

   After the Istibra, the penis should be washed as mentioned in No. 1. Women have no need of Istibra.
3. The benefit of Istibra is that if after Istibra and washing, you suspect that some wet material has come out of penis and you are in doubt whether it is urine or not, you have no need of washing again. You will say to yourself that I have done Istibra and taken out all urine, so it is not urine. But, if you are sure that it is urine, or if you have not done Istibra and you are doubting whether it is urine or not, in both these conditions, you will have to wash again.

(b) AFTER THE ACTION OF BOWELS (LAVATORY)

4. If the stool (excreta) is somewhat dry so that it has not dirtied more than the normal exit of the stool, it can be cleaned by :
   (a) stone;
   (b) or clay;
   (c) or cloth;
   (d) or paper:
   (e) or other such things
   which may rub out the stool (excrata). All such things must be Tahir before starting the rubbing. Also, it is necessary that the rubbing should be done at least 3 times. If you

feel that there is still some stool, you should go on rubbing (even after 3 times) until the paper (or other material which is used for cleaning) comes clean.
The third necessity is that for every rubbing a fresh paper (or cloth etc.) should be used. One paper cannot be used twice. It is necessary to mention here that use of the water for cleaning is preferable in every case.

5. If the stool is not dry and has dirtied more than normal portion of the body, it can be cleaned by Water only. Nothing else can clean it.

   5(a) In cleaning by water, you must clean so much that you are sure that the stool has been washed completely.

6. It is necessary to wash hand, after cleaning stool or urine, two times.

(C) OTHER RULES REGARDING URINATING OR BOWELING :

7. It is Wajib to sit in a place where nobody can see your genital parts. This rule does not apply in case of husband and wife. It is not necessary to hide from either of them.
8. It is Haram (Unlawful) to sit facing Quibla, or with back towards Quibla.
9. It is haram to rub the stool (as mentioned in No. 4) with sacred things like a paper of Qur'an or clay of the graves of Imams (A.S.). Also it is Haram to rub it with any bone or any other stool of animal like cow-dung, etc.

(D)OTHER THINGS:

10. It is highly stressed that the superfluous hair on the genital parts should be removed regularly. Women are encouraged to remove it at least twice a month, while men should remove it once a month at least. Muslims, generally, do not wait so long. Many people shave it twice weekly. Hair removing lotion or soap may be used by women. Indeed, it is preferred in the Shariat. They are not encouraged to use razor. But I have seen in many books that man should not use these lotions etc., because they harm his masculinity. He should shave it with razor. The superfluous hair in the arm-pits also should be removed.
11. Nails should be cut at least once a week. If there is more than normal dirt in the nails, Wuzu or Ghusl may become difficult. Therefore attention is drawn to it.
12. Nail polish is a nuisance, because Wuzu cannot be done with nail polish on. It is necessary that water should reach the nails without any cover.

(E)CONCESSIONS FOR A NURSING MOTHER:

13. A woman (not man) who is rearing a boy infant (not girl), who has got no other cloth to wear, and her only cloth becomes Najis by the urine of the boy (not by any other Najasat) is permitted to pray in the same cloth. There is only one condition. She must wash and clean that cloth once in 24 hours. After that she may pray without any anxiety though the child may urinate on her. This rule is for the cloth only, not for parts of body.

Q60: Can a woman recite Qur'an or Dua during her monthly period?

A. Qur'an :

1. It is Haram to recite from those 4 Suras which have ayats of Wajib Sajda. These are Alif Lam Meem Sajda; Ha Meem Sajda; Najm and Iqra. Even reciting Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim with intention of any of these Suras is Haram.
2. It is Haram to touch writing of the Qur'an in that condition.
3. It is allowed (but strongly disliked) to carry Qur'an or touch it (even without touching the writing) in that condition.
4. It is allowed to recite Qur'an (other than the 4 above mentioned Suras) by memory but it is strongly disliked to recite more than 7 ayats.

Dua:

1. It is not allowed to touch the writing of those parts of Dua (in any script) which contain the ayats of Qur'an or names of Allah, Prophets, Imams or Masumeen. As almost all Duas contain these things, one MUST avoid touching any part of the writings of Dua.
2. Reciting Dua by looking into it (without touching the writing) or by memory is allowed during the monthly period.

Q61: What are the rules concerning white secretion from woman if it is not connected with sexual act or thought?

A. If it has not come out as a result of sexual act or thought then it is not Najis. But she should see her Doctor to make sure that her health is all right.

Q62: The sweat produced on human body after masturbation but before "Ghusl" is najis. Is the sweat produced after night ejaculations during dream (wetbed) najis also?

A. No — And, according to the Fatwa of Agha-e-Khoui, even the sweat produced during or after unlawful Janabat is not Najis. But if that sweat is on the body or cloth, Namaz will not be valid.

Q63: Why do Muslims pray five times a day?

A. The Holy Prophet once asked his companions that if a man had his house on a river-bank and bathed properly in that river 5 times a day, would there remain any dirt on his body? The companions replied : "No, O Prophet of Allah, he would remain absolutely clean. There would be no dirt on his body". The Holy Prophet said : "The daily prayers of 5 times are like that river and if a Muslim properly prays 5 times a day there would remain no dirt of sin or immorality on him".

The same thing has been accepted by many Christian writers like Rev. James Muller and Mr. C. M. King. The latter writes that by nature, when a man is engaged in worldly affairs or entertainments, he pays no attention to his moral development; and some entertainments by their nature make the man forget God. When I think how Islam has made its followers obliged to pray 5 times in a day and night and has ordered them to discharge this duty in all conditions, I have to admit that the Muslim's prayer certainly is the best way of guidance, as it removes unhealthy thoughts from minds after short intervals. When the time comes to pray

and the Muslims gather Into the Mosque to pray, they become bound by sincerity, love and unity, and prayer creates in them the humility and modesty. When rich and poor stand together to pray, it demonstrates the equality of Islam.

Q64: I always pray with sincere intention and wish but I cannot concentrate while praying. So, are my prayers accepted and valid? Will I ever be able to concentrate? I try very hard but in vain?

A. Your prayer is alright. Try to think about the meanings of the words you recite. I think in this way you may be able to concentrate more and more on the prayers.

Q65: I find it impossible to repay my KAZA fasts and prayers due to lack of time and some personal reasons. Any other ways to repay them back?

A. No personal reason can ever justify neglecting the Qaza of prayers; and no so-called "lack of time" can save you from the Qaza of fasts. If you have time to sleep and eat you have enough time to pray your Namaz; and if you have time to rest even one or two days in a month you have enough time to fast the Qaza.

Such lame excuses will serve no purpose on the Day of Judgement.

Q66: What happens when you combine all the prayers of the week and you pray them all on one day?

A. It is the greatest sin not to pray in time. According to the Hadith of the Holy Prophet the prayer is the boundry line between Islam and Kufr. If someone leaves one of his prayers, he commits one of the greatest sins. Then what will be his position if he leaves the prayers of one complete day? And I do not find words to express the horror of leaving the prayers of whole week.

Of course, if someone has committed this sin, then he MUST pray those prayers in Qadha, as soon as possible.

Q67: Maghrib prayer time ends at midnight. How can we know the exact midnight?

A. The time of Maghrib begins after sunset when the reddish colour at East vanishes; and ends when only four Rik'ats' time remains to exact midnight, because the four Rik'ats' time just before exact mid-night is Isha's reserved time, and if someone has not prayed Maghrib by then, it becomes Qaza; he should pray Isha in that 4 Rik'ats' time.

If any person did not pray Maghrib and Isha in time, owing to some justifiable reason, he should pray both prayers before Subh-e-Sadique without niyyat of 'Ada' or 'Qaza'.

Now coming to your question about mid-night. Mid-night is the exact half between sunset and sunrise, according to the Fatwa of Agha-e-Khoui.

Q68: Ghusl of Mass-e-Mayyit becomes wajib after touching a dead body. Now if some-one is a doctor or nurse, and he/she has to touch dead-bodies every now and then, should he/she do Ghusl after every contact?

Roshanali M. M. Dewji, Essex (U.K.)

A. Ghusl of Mass-e-Mayyit becomes wajib, if one touches the dead body of a human being

after it has become cold (and, in case of a Muslim's dead body, after being cold and before completion of Ghusl-e-Meyyit).

If a Doctor or Nurse touches a dead body (as mentioned above), he/she may do one Ghusl-e-Masse-Mayyit, in the afternoon to enable him to pray Zuhr and Asr, and shortly afterwards, Maghrib and Isha.

If he/she touches it in night, Ghusl-e-Masse-Mayyit should be done before morning prayer. If because of unbearable cold, one is unable to do this Ghusl, Tayammum should be done in its place.

Q69: Can Friday and Idd prayers be prayed individually?

A. Idd prayer, yes, Friday prayer, No. Moreover, Friday prayer is not even necessary in the "Ghaibat of Imam (A.S.)".

Q70: What are the qualifications of a peshnamaz?

A. He must be

(a) Ithna-Asheri,

(b) Sane,

(c) Legitimately born,

(d) He must be 'Adil'. It means that he does not commit big sins even unintentionally; and if he commits any small sin (not intentionally) he repents at once and does not repeat it.

(e) He must have correct pronunciation of Arabic words.

(f) He must be a man (if he is leading in a prayer attended by men), and

(g) He must not be praying sitting (if the people behind him are praying standing); also

(h) he must know the necessary 'Masail' of Taharat and prayers

Q71: Can an Ithna-Asheri pray in a Sunni mosque (a) individually (b) with Jamaat led by a Sunni?

A. (a) Yes.

(b)The Sunni shariat is not strict about the qualifications of a 'Peshnamaz'. Therefore, they often pray behind a Peshnamaz who is not 'Adil'. Therefore, you should avoid praying with them.

If, however, you have to join their Jamaat prayer, join but pray your whole Namaz with 'Furada' Niyyet. Thus you will sit and stand with the Jamaat, but pray your own Namaz.

Q72: If there is no Ithna-Asheri mosque in a town can the Friday prayer be prayed in a Jamaat led by a Sunni?

A. Already explained in the Answer of Question 71.

Q73: In July, my cousin and I went to the gathering of 'Federation of Students' Islamic Society of England and Ireland (FOSIS). We prayed Jamaat namaaz. Now, the Imam was a Sunni (as majority were sunn is); We prayed behind him. My cousin and I had already prayed (Namaz) in our rooms and

then we went and prayed the Jamat Namaz. Was it alright what we did? Do we have to have a special Niyyat if we pray Sunni Jamaat Namaaz?

A. Of course, if you had to pray in the Jamaat to avoid social Embarrassment it was all right; but that Namaaz of yours behind a non-Ithna-Asheri Peshnamaz was not a Namaaz at all. It was good that you had already prayed in your room.

Q 74: If, in a prayer, we don't keep 'mohr' (although we have it, without any fear), is our prayer void? If I don't have 'mohr' on what can I prostrate?

A. The thing upon which you can do Sajdah is either earth or anything growing from earth, provided it is from those things which are not eaten or worn.

Therefore, Sajdah is not allowed on cloth or fruits or edible vegetables, or on such a thing which does not come under the term 'Earth' viz, diamond or gold etc; or does not come under the term Vegetation viz., ash or coal.

Also, Sajdah is not correct on hide or skin, because it does not grow from the earth; nor is it allowed on carpets made of wool, cotton, jute or silk, because wool and silk do not grow from earth and cotton and jute are used in clothes.

Sometimes it is seen that people do Sajdah upon their hands or nails, even while praying in the Masjid. Their Namaz is Batil, without any doubt. Remember that the mats are made from a fibre which is neither eaten nor worn and it is quite in order to do Sajdah on them, especially if your forehead rests upon an uncoloured portion. Likewise, you may do Sajdah on real (but not on artificial) marble. Cement and lime are made from burnt stones; therefore a cemented floor or floor covered with lime cannot be used for Sajdah. Likewise, Sajdah is not allowed on earthenware, after it has been treated by fire.

Q75: During our Prayers when we have said "ADDUA U BAINAS SAJDATAIN" we prostrate as before for the second time. There is book which I have read and reads 'After that say Atlah-O-Akbar and stand up again for second rakaat and do as you did before. After the Sura-tul-Fatiha and another Sura or a portion of the Holy Qur'an. When you have done two prostrations, sit down and read Tashah-hud! Please would you explain me what this means so that I can start praying. Please, could you explain all the 5 hours of praying. Is there any book which I can buy which tells all about Islam translated in English. Please answer me these questions.

A. The question about 2nd Rik'at: Every prayer is divided in Rik'ats. A Rik'at ends after the 2nd Sajdah and when you stand up, the next Rik'at begins.

Your quotation just says that at the end of the first Rik'at i.e., after the 2nd Sajdah of first Rik'at, you should sit down, say Allah-o-Akbar and then stand up for the second Rik'at, which is to be performed exactly like the first Rik'at. But when you have finished the second Sajdah of 2nd Rik'at you have to sit down and recite Tashahhud (which is called 'At-Tahayyat' in Sunni terminology).

You can refer to "Elements of Islamic Studies" which will tell you all the necessary things about cleanliness, prayers and fasting.

Q76: Can you translate 'Tahiyatu' in English for me?

Mohamed N. Muakasa, Entebbe, (Uganda).

A. The following is the translation of 'Attahiyyatu' in English.

“Salutations, prayers and goodness are meant for Allah. Peace upon you O Prophet! And mercy, blessing of Allah may be upon you

Peace be upon the righteous servants of Allah and I witness that Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) is His servant and His messenger.

O Allah ! Send thy blessings upon Muhammad and his progeny. Peace be upon you and the Mercy and Blessings of Allah upon you.”

Q77: IHTIYAT PRAYERS — How and which time is it prayed?

A. IHTIYAT PRAYERS : When some doubt occurs about the number of the Rik'ats of Prayer (the rules of which are described in the books of Fiqah), one has to pray one and/or two Rik'ats Prayer of Ihtiyat. Here I am explaining how to pray that prayer. Soon after finishing the Prayer (in which the doubt had occured and which requires Prayer of Ihtiyat for its completion and validation) without looking away from Quibla or doing anything which makes a Prayer Batil, you are to stand up and make the Niyyat. (If the prayer of Ihtiyat is to be performed sitting, then remain sitting after the first Prayer and make Niyyat) : *"I pray the prayer of Ihtiyat one (or two) Rik'at(s) Wajib Qurbatan Ilallah."* Then say Takbeerat-ul-Ihram, recite Sura Al-Hamd in whisper. Go to Rukuu then do Sajda; recite Tashahhud and Salaam. Your Prayer of Ihtiyat is finished.

If you have to recite two Rik'ats of Prayer of Ihtiyat, then you should stand up for the second Rik'at just after the second Sajda of the first Rik'at in the usual way. Recite the second Rik'at also with just Sura Al-Hamd, without even Qunut; and then finish the Prayer in usual way."

Q78: Will you please explain the necessary rules and method of 'Swalatul-Meyyit'.

A. SWALATUL MEYYIT (PRAYER OF MEYYIT).

Prayer of Meyyit is Wajib-e-Kifai, i.e. it is obligatory on every Muslim but as soon as it is performed correctly by one of them, it remains no more obligatory on others; but if no one offers the prayer everyone is sinner.

If the deceased was six-year old, Prayer-of Meyyit is wajib. In offering this prayer, Taharat of the body or dress is not necessary; also in Shia Fiqah, Ghusl, Wudhu or Tayammum is not wajib. But the intention of Prayer (Niyyat) and facing Quibla is essential. The dead-body should be placed in such a way that the head of the meyyit remains on the right of those who offer the prayer. In the case of the dead-body of a male, the Imam should stand near its waist; and in the case of a female, near the chest.

Prayer of Meyyit according to Shia Fiqah, has 5 Takbirs (including Takbi-ratul-Ihram) : After first Takbir, (i.e. Takbiratul-Ihram) Kalema-e-Shahada-tain is recited; After 2nd Takbir, Salawat is recited. After 3rd Takbir, prayer is offered for all the Believers and Muslims; After 4th Takbir, prayer is offered especially for the deceased one; The 5th Takbir is said and the prayer comes to an end.

The shortest method of offering this prayer is as follows : Niyyat: I pray Namaz-e-Meyyit of this corpse Wajib, Kurbatan-ilallah. Allah-o-Akbar;

Ashhado Al-La liana Illallaho Wahdahuu La Sharika Lah; Wa Ashhado Anna Muhammadan

Abduhuu wa Rasuluh;

Allah-o-Akbar;

Allahumma Salle Ala Muhammadin wa Aale Muhammad;

Allah-o-Akbar;

Allahummaghfir Ml Mumeneena wal Mumenaat;

Allah-o-Akbar;

Allahummaghfir Le Haazal Meyyit (In case the deceased is a female, say Allahummaghfir Le Haazehil Meyyit);

Allah-o-Akbar;

After the completion of the prayer recite "Rabbana Aatena Fid-Dunya Hasanatanw wa Fil-Aakherate Hasanatanw Waquina Azaban-Naar."

It is necessary to mention that even if this prayer is offered by Jamaat, everyone has to recite the whole prayer. It is not correct just to say 'Allah-o-Akbar' and remain silent between the Takbirs. Such a prayer is Batil.

Q79: What are the differences between the methods of prayer of different Muslim sects?

A. The difference in the prayers of different sects of Islam are not very many; though it is sad to admit the existence of even a few differences, because the Holy Prophet did lead the Muslims in prayers for 23 years, and they must have become quite familiar with his way of prayers.

There are historical reasons behind these differences and this short letter is not the place to expound on that subject.

Q80: Is it correct to pray Dhuhuri at 1.30 after Juma?

Mohammed N. Muakasa, Entebbe (Uganda).

A. There is a difference of opinion about the prayer of "Dhuhuri" on Fridays. Such differences are to be found in hundreds of rules. But it is sad to see that in Uganda and some places of Tanzania these differences have been blown out of proportion and have caused split among the followers of the same madh-hab.

The Ibadhis believe that 'Juma' prayer can be conducted only by the rightful Imam. As a result they do not pray Juma in East Africa.

The Shia Ithna-Asheris, in these days of seclusion of their 12th Imam, follow in the matter of religion a living Mujtahid (who must be the most learned religious scholar of the time).

A group of the Shia Mujtahids holds that an Ithna-Asheri in these days of seclusion of the Imam has a choice to pray either Juma or Dhuhuri; though it is better to pray Dhuhuri also (without Jamaat and without niyyat of Wajib) after Juma. Other group holds that Juma prayer is not Wajib nowadays though it may be prayed, just to get 'thawab'.

So, inspite of this difference in theory, both groups are united in practice.

Because both pray Juma first, and then pray Dhuhri. And there is no trouble.

Among Sunnis of Uganda, there are 3 groups : Some pray Juma; others Dhuhuri; and a third group prays Juma and Dhuhuri both.

Here I should point out an important doctrine of the Shia Ithna-Asheri sect, which if followed by others would eliminate all troubles and bickerings. The Ithna-Asheris say that everyone, if he is not a Mujtahid himself, must follow the ruling of the most learned living Mujtahid. But no Mujtahid or his follower can condemn the ruling of another Mujtahid, and if there are two Mujtahids praying side by side each should follow his own ruling.

This rule takes out the element of personal grudge or hatred from the rules of Sheriat and everyone follows the dictates of his Mujtahid quite freely without any attack from any side.

If the Sunnis of Uganda and the coast of Tanzania adopt this attitude, there will be no room for those who want to exploit the mass hysteria for their own purpose.

Q 81 : Give me full particulars if someone finds that they have prayed Eight Rakats in Taraweeh. How he should recover them?

A. The Muslims are divided about "Taraweeh". All of them agree that Sunnat or Nafl prayar cannot be prayed with Jamaat (except Salatul-Istisqua). But the Sunnis pray Taraweeh with Jamaat. This system began in the 14th year of Hijra during the reign of the 2nd Caliph Hadhrat Umar bin Khattab. The incident is narrated in hundreds of books, but I am quoting from 'Sahih' of Imam Bukhari (Kitabu-ut-Taraweeh) :-

Abdur Rehman bin Abdul Qari said : I went with Umar to the Mosque in a Ramadhan night and (saw that) the people were praying separately ... So Umar said, "I think it would be nice if I make them pray with Jamaat behind one Imam." So he decided and gathered them under Ubai bin Kaab. (Abdur-Rehman said) Then I went there with him another night and the people were praying with Jamaat; Umar said, "Good Bid-at is this..."

Allama Qastalani says in his "Irshadus-Sari" (the Commentary of Sahih-Bukhari) : "Umar named it 'Bid-at' because the Holy Prophet did not introduce the system of Jamaat prayer for Taraweeh, nor was it done in the time of (1st Caliph, Abu Bakr) Siddique (r.a.) nor was there any fixed time for it nor any fixed number of Rik'ats." All these innovations were done by the 2nd Caliph and so he himself named it a 'Bid-at'.

The Shias, on the other hand, say that the Sheriat was made complete during the life-time of the Holy Prophet as Allah said in the Qur'an : *"Today have I perfected your religion for you and completed my Blessings upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion."* (Sura 5, Ayat 4); and after the Holy Prophet nobody has any right to add or substract from tha rules of Sheriat. So, 2nd Caliph had no power to exempt Taraweeh from the rule mentioned above.

Anyhow, for those who pray Taraweeh by Jamaat, if they make any mistake, there is no qadha and no "recovering". You should be careful next night, that is all.

Q82: Christians allow anybody or any religion to worship in their Churches. Now do Muslims allow non-Muslims to enter their Mosque in worshipping terms?

A. The 'Mosque' in Islam is a very sacred place where even Muslims cannot enter without ritually cleansing themselves. As non-Muslims do not observe these rules, they are not allowed inside.

Q83: Why the Muslim women are not allowed to get in Mosque and yet when the time comes for fasting they are fasting like men.

A. It is not correct that Muslim women are not allowed to get in the mosque. As a matter of fact Muslim women may pray in the congregation. But you will see in the article "Woman in Islam"

that Islam is not in favour of mingling of men and women.

Therefore, in the congregational prayers, there should be either a curtain or wall between the men and women or women should stand after the last line of the men if there is no cover.

On the other hand, it is ordained that if a woman prays in her house, she gets the same grace of Allah which men get from praying in the mosque. We may sum it up in the following sentence :

A woman is allowed to pray in the mosque if she observes the rules laid down; she is encouraged to pray in her house because Islam does not like the two sexes to mingle together.

Q84: Is Ramadhan a special word to express the Ramazan in English like Minaret for Minar?

A. The Arabic letter "ض" is the most difficult one in the Arabic alphabets to pronounce. In India and Pakistan people generally pronounce it as English "Z", and that is why they write "Ramzan". But the Western Scholars write it as "Ramadhan". Though "dh" is not its correct pronunciation, it is still better than Z. The inadequacy of this attempt can be seen from the fact that ض and ظ and ذ have completely separate pronunciations in Arabic, but in European languages all are represented by "dh".

Q85: What are the actual sources that make we Moslems all over the world fast during the month of Ramadhan, why, who introduced and when?

A. The fast during the month of Ramadhan has been ordained by Allah in the Holy Qur'an. The translation of the Ayat is as follows :-

"O ye who believe — Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may guard yourself (against evil); for a fixed number of days; The month of Ramadhan, that in which was sent down the Qur'an So whosever of you witnesses the month he shall therein....... " (Qur'an; Sura 2, Ayats 183 — 185).

This ayat was revealed in the month of Shabaan in the 2nd year of Hijra and the fast was observed in the month of Ramadhan that very year.

It was introduced by Allah through His last Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (S.A.W.W.)

As to "why" please read the article "Spirit of Fasting" published in The Light Vol. III No. 5. (Now, read 'Fast' published by this Mission.)

Q86: When are we expected to fast according to your calculations?

A. Fast of Ramadhan begins with the month of Ramadhan and ends with the end of that month. There is no calculation like English months. Islamic months may be ascertained by any of these methods :-

1. If the previous month has completed its 30th day.
2. If 2 religiously trustworthy men attest that they have seen the new moon.
3. If a great number of people attest that they have seen the new moon.

Q87: If a Muslim resides in a place where days and nights are of more than 24 hours duration, like in Arctic Zone, how will he pray and fast?

A. There is a difference of opinion about the duty of a Muslim residing in Arctic Zone. Some Ulema have written that he should follow the time of any town of his choice between Arctic and Antarctic circles. Others say that he should follow the time of the nearest town outside Arctic circle. Still others say that he should follow the timing of Mecca.

Agha-e-Khoui gives no clear Fatwa on this matter, though he is inclined to say that a Muslim should not go to such a place

Q88: Being the Headmaster of a Secondary School attended by a few Pakistani pupils observing the Moslem Religion I should be glad to receive your opinion on the following points:

- **Most of these pupils wear beards at certain times of the year which all the other pupils are not allowed to do. Being a minority I should like them to submit to the common rule of the School.**
- **I have noticed that at the same times of the year (Ramadhan and the feast of Martyr Hussein...) they all were quite exhausted by their fast and other practices of their religion. Considering these pupils' interest, the damage they suffer in their studies, the fact that religion is essentially a disposition of one's mind and soul and that the part played by the body though necessary is not essential, I should like them to be more moderate as regards the corporal part they take in their religious rites.**

Le Proviseur due Lycee de
Morandava,
Malagasy Republic.

A. Thank you for your letter which by oversight is undated and which reached me on the first of February, 1966. I regret the delay in replying which was due to the unusual pressure of work in the last month.

I am very grateful to you for referring the matters raised in your letter to me, instead of making an arbitrary decision on them. This reflects very favourably upon your goodself. You will appreciate that the questions you have posed are of considerable importance and I hope you will forgive me for dealing with them at some length.

I should make it clear from the start that it is not competent for any Moslem to alter or vary the code of Islam. The Law of God is beyond the jurisdiction of any human-being.

Islam does not confine itself to an attitude of mind only. Man consists of body, mind and spirit; and Islam puts equal emphasis on all three parts of human life, developing an individual as a whole, not in parts.

As you may be aware, Ramadhan is a period when a Moslem is subjected to a supreme test. After one month training, he becomes habituated to obey the commands of God with the same unwavering loyalty during the whole year. Surely, the training is not expected to be easy or comforting. The essence of this training lies in its hardship, so that those who fast should become fortified to face and bear any kind of difficulty in obedience to the commands of God, in their life.

Commemoration of the tragedy of Karbala is not only the commemoration of a historical episode. It affords an opportunity of appreciating the true values of human moral life. You are

no doubt aware of the history of martyrdom of Imam Husain and can judge for yourself of the values it can inspire. Here I would like to point to only one of the good effects of the tragedy of Karbala. Not long ago, His Excellency Habib Bourguiba, President of Tunisia, declared that factory labourers are exempted from fasting. He might have succeeded in incorporating his decree in religion had it not been for Husain. It was Husain who saved Islam from the whims of political powers-to-be. We see a vast difference of attitude before Karbala and after it. Before Karbala, the Muslim King was considered the final authority on religion. After Karbala, he is reduced to the position of a king without any right to interfere in religion. Before Karbala, people used to interpret or modify the teachings of Qur'an to accommodate the actions of the rulers. After Karbala, Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet became the real standard of religion in practice also as they had been in theory from the beginning. Now the actions and decrees of the rulers are put to the test of Qur'an and traditions, and then accepted or rejected accordingly. No wonder that the President of Tunisia failed in his endeavours.

There are millions of Ithna-Asheris in the world who most fastidiously practise the precepts of their religion including fasting and the observance of the Moharram ceremonies, without any adverse effect on their health or academic career. In fact, I am proud to say that our small Community has among its fold more distinguished scholars than its number and size may suggest. Moslems have been fasting generation after generation for about 14 centuries; and they have not suffered any setback in their health nor have they acquired any special health problem of their own. Therefore, you may rest assured that no damage to body or study will befall them owing to fasting or Moharram ceremonies.

Every Moslem is enjoined to grow a beard. Unfortunately this command is not strictly adhered to owing to the influence of Western culture. From the religious point of view, therefore, I am not in a position (nor for that matter is anybody else) to advise the Moslem students of your School to shave their beards, when in compliance with the rules of their religion they elect to grow them.

In your country my co-religionists are privileged to be members of a society which grants every individual freedom of religion. I can well appreciate that strict adherence to the Islamic code may well occasionally conflict with the rules laid down by an institution, as it does in your case with the beard. But, I feel that institutions, like democratic governments,should keep an open mind about an individual's freedom to follow the precepts of his faith.

I trust, Sir, that the explanations I have given will satisfy you to the extent of allowing the Moslem students in your School to freely practice the tenets of their religion.

I, once again, thank you for communicating with me on these matters. Your concern for your pupils is indeed most commendable; and as you must also wish them to grow up to be good citizens, you will, no doubt, encourage them in their adherence to the code of Islam which by the very strictness of its tenets infuses in every Moslem piety, will-power, tolerance, justice and charity.

And, so far as their academic career is concerned, I may add here that in this country it happens very often that the months of fasting coincide with the examinations and yet I am proud of the very high percentage of the successful candidates from our community.

Q89: Can a woman fast when pregnant? And is it a MUST in Ramadhan?

A. If the pregnant woman is afraid that the fast would harm her own health, she is exempted from fasting at that time; but she should fast its QAZA afterwards.

If, she is afraid not about her own health, but about the health of the unborn child, she again is exempted from fasting at that time, but she will have to pay Kaffara @ 3/4 kilogram wheat, rice

or any such staple food per day to a poor Mumin. And she should fast its QAZA afterwards.

Q90: What sort of sacrifice should a person perform after having sexual intercourse during the month of Ramadhan before breaking the fast? Well, he did not intend to make love with his wife since it is forbidden during the day time. It was sort of strong temptation of the wife. She just went to her husband's bedroom while he was resting and she stripped from head to toe and forced him to make love — the couple were newly weds.

A. If the wife forced the husband to have sexual intercourse during daytime in the month of Ramadhan, she would have to fast 60 days as retribution. (At least 31 days should be continuous; after that she may fast with gaps.), or feed sixty poor Muslims (feeding one person sixty days is not enough); and, in addition to that fast or feeding, she would be punished for that behaviour (if she is in a country where Islamic Sheriat is followed in the Courts).

Q91 : Reference your latest issue of "THE LIGHT" Magazine, page 10, on the subject "ABOUT ZAKAT", one person has commented as under:

"To me the question was beautifully put up and the answer poor.

There are no orders in the Holy Qur'an to murder and massacre anybody although the Muslims are ordered to wage a war against those who first begin hostilities and who persecute the Muslims, and that, too, with strict limitations. Only those wars which are fought in self-defence and for the protection of Islamic religious principles and for the rights of the weak and the oppressed fall under jihad.

Leaving apart the extremist interpretation of jihad it means a fight between good and evil, virtue and vice. The great Prophet said, "The greatest Jihad is against a man's own lust." The term Jihad is also applicable to the effort of the faulty towards perfection and to patience under persecution. The daily prayers which train a Muslim to rush forth at the call of the Muezzin setting aside all worldly engagements, the yearly fasting in the month of Ramadhan make him capable of withstanding hunger and thirst, ZAKAAT influences and invigorates in him a sacrificing spirit. All these sacrificial rites are forms of Jihad and transforms a Muslim into a perfect 'Mujahid'. In short, Jihad is striving in the way of Allah. We can express it correctly by saying to do or to die in the way of Allah is a Muslim's foremost duty and a Muslim's whole life comprises of a series of Jihads against his own lusts".

The above extract is just sent for your information. Should you wish to send your commentary, I shall be glad to transmit it to the party concerned. For your information he believes that Zakaat is payable and falls due on any form of currency. His main argument is:Paper Money can buy the items listed in which Zakat was prescribed.

A Your correspondent seems to try to confuse the issue. He has left all the main reasons given about Zakaat not being payable in currency notes and has written about 'Jihad' which was not the subject issue of the article referred to.

Even there he seems not to comprehend my point. I had written :

"If an order is repeatedly given in the Qur'an, it does not follow that it is meant for one and all

without any regard to its necessary conditions".

And then I gave examples of Hajj and Jihad. It was the reply to that part of the question which had said, "Qur'an repeatedly says, 'and establish the prayer and give Zakat", but we ignore the order

Your correspondent mentions the conditions of Jihad and tries of justify "not raising sword in Jihad" by saying that the conditions of fighting in Jihad are not fulfilled nowadays. He forgets conveniently that by the same reasoning Zakat in currency notes is not given because conditions of Zakaat are not fulfilled there.

He should once again read the said article and ponder upon the following points explained therein :-

(a) Wealth is not confined in the 9 items listed for Zakaat; still the Holy Prophet did not prescribe Zakaat in other things.

(b) Not even all gold and silver was taxable.

(c) Currency note is not real money. There are great differences between coins and notes.

(d) Before extending the Zakaat to currency notes, one would have to extend it to house, land, garden, jewelleries etc.

(e) Quiyas is not in our Madh-hab.

Here it should be remembered that there is no mention in the Qur'an on which items Zakat is wajib. It was explained by the Holy Prophet. There were and are other properties, including land, jewels, etc. But the Holy Prophet did not include them in Zakat. And it is explained by the Imams in clear words that "the Holy Prophet exempted all other things"

Now the Shia sheriat cannot add to that list in defiance to the Holy Prophet.

To say that "the Zakat should be payable on currency notes because it can buy the items in which Zakat was prescribed", shows the immaturity of mind. Law (whether secular or religious) does not concern itself with what "can be"; it is concerned with what "is". If Qadhi or the Police were to follow the argument to its logical end, how would he like to be punished for hoarding wine and keeping a stolen car in his possession because the money in his possession can buy these items as well.

It is fortunate for him that the sheriat does not think so. It does not allow a person to give money in place of food, etc., in any kind of Kaffarah; it does not allow a pilgrim to pay the poor the money of Qurbani; it exempts a person from paying the kaffarah if the prescribed thing or things are not available. If a man has to give all three kaffarahs of fast, i.e., emancipating a slave, fasting 60 days and feeding 60 poor momineen, he cannot emancipate any slave in these days. So, he will be exempted from that particular kaffarah and is never required to give its price in money or other property.

In Fitrah it has been prescribed that it has an alternative, i.e., the price, and that the price is preferred to the original thing. So we do accordingly. But it must be remembered that it is an exception (which proves the rule) and that here we act on the explicit command of sheriat (which has given us the choice) and not on our own whim.

I will not comment here on other irrelevant points in that letter because I do not want to be side-tracked from the main subject.

Q92: I shall be highly obliged if you will kindly enlighten me regarding Khums. As for the word "Ghanimtum" of the verse (8:41) of the Holy Qur'an, many critics have misinterpreted as 'Spoils of War' instead of Year's Savings as

mentioned in your book, ELEMENTS OF ISLAMIC STUDIES. Hence, I now look forward to receiving a convincing explanation of Khums and the word Ghanimat.

A. I know there are some misguided people who misinterpret the word 'Ghanimat' as you have reported. These people know neither the Arabic language nor the history of Khums; they do not know the common Muslim (not only Shia) sheriat about khums; and they are ignorant of Tafseer and Hadith.

(1) Arabic Language: The famous Arabic dictionary "Al-Munjid" (by Father Louis Maaluf of Beirut) say:

الغنیم والغنیمۃ .....مایوخذمن المحاربین عنوۃً . المکسب عموماً.....وقولھم الغنم بالغرم ای
مقابل بہ فکماان الما لک نحیتص بالغنم ولایشارکہ فیہ احد فلذلک یتحمل الغرم وحدہ

"Al ghanim and Al-ghanimat"

(a) What is taken from the fighting enemies by force.

(b) All earnings generally........ And the saying "Al-ghunm for Al-ghurm" means that the "profit" stands against expenses, i.e., as the owner is the sole proprietor of "the profit"" and nobody shares it with him, so he only bears all the expenses and risk".

So as you see, in Arabic language "الغنیمۃ" has two meanings, one the spoils of war and the other "profit". The above quoted proverb also proves that the "profit" is not uncommon meaning.

When a word in the Qur'an can be interpreted in more than one way, it is incumbent upon the Muslims to seek guidance from Ahlul-bait. Otherwise, they would be guilty of "تفسیر بالرای"

"Tafseer Bir-Rai" (Interpreting the "Qur'an" according to one's own wishes and views); and this is a sin which automatically pushes the sinner into Jahannam.

(2) History of Khums: Khums is one of those things which were introduced by Hadhrat Abdul-Muttalib, (the grand father of our Holy Prophet) and continued in Islam.

When Hadhrat Abdul-Muttalib, acting upon a command of God given him in dream, rediscovered the well of Zamzam, he found in it many valuable things which were buried in it in very remote past by Ismailites when they had feared that their enemies would usurp them. (It is a very long story and I do not think that its details are necessary for the subject of this letter).

When Hadhrat Abdul-Muttalib found that buried treasure, he took out its one-fifth in the way of God, and kept 4/5 to himself.

Then it became a custom in his family,- and after the 'Hijrat' of our Holy Prophet, this same system was incorporated in Islam.

Thus, the first khums given was not from the "spoils of war", but from buried treasure (which is one of the seven items in which Khums is wajib).

(3) Muslim's Sheriat: Not a single sect of Islam confines the meaning of "Ghanimat" to the "Spoils of War". In addition to the "Spoil of War" the following items are subject to Khums :-

(a) Minerals: Khums is wajib in Hanafi and Shia sects.

(b) Buried Treasure: Khums is wajib in ALL Muslim sects, i.e., Shia, Hanafi, Maliki, Hambali and Shafii.

In addition to above, in Shia Ithna-Asheri sect, khums is wajib in the things which are taken

out from sea by diving (like pearl and coral, etc); in a land purchased by a Dhimmi from a Muslim; in the year's earning and in a lawful property mixed with unlawful property.

There are detailed rules and conditions in all the above things, but here I am not writing a book of Fiqah. I just wanted to show you that not a single sect of Islam thinks that "ghanimat" means spoil of war only. Therefore, anybody who wants to interpret that ayat in his own way, should start a new sect in Islam, because his views cannot be reconciled with any of the existing groups !

(4) Tafseer and Hadith of Ahlul-bait: As I have mentioned in the beginning, interpretation of the Qur'an must be based on the teachings of Ahlul-bait. The word ghanimat" in the Ayat 8: 41 has clearly been interpreted as “الفائدة المكتسبة” (the earned profit) by our Holy Imams, who explained it has I have mentioned earlier. Therefore, an Ithna-Asheri has no choice but to follow that interpretation.

So, it is crystal clear that the word "ghanimat" was never treated as being confined to "the spoils of war" by any sect of Islam, SINCE FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, and so far as our Imams are concerned, it meant many things other than the spoil of war right from the days of Hadhrat Ali (A.S.), as authentic traditions show.

Q93: I am working and earning only £15; have I got to give Zakat to the poor during the month of Ramadhan since I got my parent to support — my father died twelve years ago. And if so how much should I give the poor people? Should I also pay the same amount for my mother, sisters and brothers?

A. Zakat is not wajib on you.

But if you are 'rich' in the term of the sheriat (i.e. if you can meet your own expenses and the expenses of all your dependants without any undue difficulty), then you will have to pay "Zakat-ul-Fitra" on the eve of Idul-Fitr for yourself and for all your dependants at the rate of 3Kgs. of any staple food per person.

Q94: Is it a Must that every Muslim must go to Mecca, if so what of those who don't go there?

A. Not every Muslim. Only those whose health and wealth allows it and who fulfill all other necessary conditions.

Q95: Is there any limitation to age of going to Mecca? If so, what is the minimum? I am aged 23 years and I would like to go next year.

A. If a Muslim is adult and sane, has means to go to Mecca in the month of Hajj and his/her health is good enough to make the journey, he/she is obliged to go for Hajj.

A boy is deemed to be adult when :

(a) he is 15 years old, or

(b) rough hair grows below his navel, or

(c) if he discharges semen.

A girl is deemed to be adult when :

(a) a)she is 9 years old, or

(b) rough hair grows below her navel.

In your case, you are adult and sane and if other conditions of Hajj (concerning health and wealth) are fulfilled, Hajj is wajib (obligatory) upon you. When you go to Hajj, please remember me in your prayers.

May Allah reward your Hajj with acceptance! Amen.'

Q96: What is the most liked house to God?

A. "Kaaba in Mecca is the most liked house of God in this world, but even more liked than that is the heart of the Mumin (faithful) which is said to be the 'choicest house of Allah".

Q97: What is Jihad-e-Akbar and what steps would you take to fight Jihade-Akbar?

A. Jihad-e-Akbar: Fighting the enemies of Islam on command of Prophet or Imam is called Jihad-e-Asghar (small battle). Subduing your own desires and ambitions putting your whole self under the command of Allah is called Jihad-e-Akbar (Great Battle). It means that you should willingly sacrifice all that you have if obedience to Allah depends upon it. Neither family ties, society's relations, nor financial holdings should keep you away from right path if you happen to find it. If you succeed in this test, you have won in the Jihad-e-Akbar.

Q. 98: I understand that Jihad is a holy war. Is it true that if someone dies in the battle, he goes straight to Paradise? If so why is that?

A. Jihad: Please refer to the booklet "Islam" (P.24-26) for this subject. Remember that a martyr fighting in the cause of Allah (in its true sense) sacrifices his whole being for the Divine cause, and that Allah, in His infinite Grace and Mercy, has promised to give reward of a virtue at the ratio of at least 10 to 1. Therefore Allah rewards a martyr (who sacrificed his mortal life) with an immortal and ever-lasting life under His Mercy. That is why the martyrs are assured of Paradise.

By the way, if a martyr has some obligations towards other men which he had not fulfilled, Allah will arrange to repay those persons on the Day of judgement.

Q. 99: What is the purpose of marriage?

A. Purpose of Marriage : The institution of marriage has 3 aims, which taken together constitute the purpose of marriage :

(a) Satisfying the natural urge of physical love and sex.

(b) Procreation which ensures the continuity of mankind.

(c) Establishment of a family unit which ensures that the children born as a result of (a) and (b) above receive the love, protection and care which is essential to make them useful and normal human beings.

Sexual desire can be satisfied without marriage, but it lacks the other two (and especially the 3rd) benefits.

It should be observed in passing that those religions which try to curb this natural urge are trying to say (by deeds, not by words) that the Creator made a mistake in creating this natural desire. They fail to realize that if all human beings responded to their call of celibacy humanity will be extinct within a short period. Such teaching cannot take humanity forward because of the simple reason that they tend to be against the continuity of humanity.

Q100: The Islamic religion allows polygamy and not polyandry. Explain briefly why a man is allowed polygamy and a woman forbidden polyandry instead of both of them forbidden.

A. 'Light1 Vol. Ill, No. 6 will show the wisdom of permission of polygamy. As for polyandry, here is an episode which answers your question fully :-

Once some women came to Hadhrat Ali (A.S.) with the same question. Hadhrat Ali (A.S.) told them to bring water in cups. When they came back with the cups full of water, he ordered them to put the water in a basin.

Then he told them to take out their water, but each one should take out the same water which she had put in. They protested that it was impossible as the water had been mixed.

Hadhrat Ali (A.S.) said that it was for the same reason that a woman was not allowed to marry more than one husband at a time, because there would be no way to know who her child belonged to, and who was to be responsible for that child's upbringing.

Q101: Can a Muslim man be a husband of many wives — and if so how many at least?

A. This question is on the subject of "Polygamy". A Muslim is allowed, with certain conditions, to marry upto 4 wives at a time. What those conditions are, you will find them in an article published in our magazine "LIGHT". (Now see "Why Polygamy Is Allowed In Islam" available from this Mission) Before Islam there was no limit to the number of wives a man could marry. In every country from India to Rome and from Russia to Africa a man could marry as many wives as he pleased. (Perhaps you may have heard of some living Chiefs in Kenya having more than 50 wives).

Islam restricted the number to four. It is the maximum; and it has been fixed keeping in view the average ability of a man to satisfy all necessary conditions conducive to a happy household; physical, emotional, financial, etc., all taken together.

The 'essentiality' of polygamy in certain circumstances cannot be denied; and once you allow polygamy, you have to stop somewhere to prevent its misuse. Thus, a number had to be fixed and Islam, after keeping in view the above-mentioned requirements, has fixed it at four.

Q102: Can a wife divorce her husband if he marries another woman and does not care about her?

A. She cannot divorce him at all. She may demand divorce if the husband neglects to maintain her. And marrying a second, third or fourth wife is no ground for demanding a divorce.

Q.103: Can a Muslim woman be married to a man who is not a Muslim or vice-versa?

A. No — Nor will it be allowed by Christianity.

Q.104: Is civil marriage unlawful in our religion? Why?

A. Civil marriage is performed when the parties belong to two different religions. A muslim girl cannot marry a non-Muslim boy; and a Muslim boy cannot marry a non-Muslim girl (except marrying a Christian or a Jewish girl in temporary marriage).

Thus you will see that majority of the civil marriages is unlawful because it is against this basic rule.

The remaining cases for civil marriages become generally unlawful because they do not observe many of the conditions laid down by Islam.

Q.105: Does Islam religion agree with family planning?

A. Yes. But with certain conditions. Abortion is not allowed on any pretext.

Q106: The thing is that I have been brought up in a very bad environment. Mummy and Daddy are always quaretling, not sparing any thought for children's feelings, and they never pray. I started praying because my aunty explained its importance to me. This has been going on since my childhood. I love my aunty more than anybody else. She also loves me. Now please tell me if I am a sinner because I love my aunty more than my mummy?

A. It is indeed very regrettable that your parents behave in the way described by you. They are ruining their own happiness in this life, are contriving to be deprived of the Grace of Allah in the life hereafter; and, what is even more tragic, they are ruining the lives of their children by putting such emotional strains upon them. Children brought up in such an atmosphere have to be extra alert to protect themselves from psychological effects of this negative influence. It is for this reason that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) said : "May Allah curse the parents who (by their misconduct) instigate their children to disobey them."

This much about your parents. Now about your duty towards them. It is incumbent upon you to behave respectfully towards them, inspite of all their shortcomings. Islam has emphasized the cardinal virtue of the obedience towards parents even if the parents are 'Kafir'.

It is ordained in the Quran :

"And We enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents. To Me is your return. And if they strive to make you join in worship with Me things of which you have no knowledge,obey them not; yet bear them company in this life with fairness and consideration." (31 : 14-15).

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said : "There are three things about which one has no option, (one has to fulfil them without any condition attached) :

To return to the owner the thing entrusted to one's care, whether the owner be pious or debauchee; and to fulfil the promise whether it was (made) to a pious or a debauchee; and to do good to the parents whether they be pious or sinners".

So far as loving your aunt more than your parents is concerned, I think in the circumstances mentioned by you, it is understandable; and personally I see no harm in it, provided your dealing with your parents is based on respect and good manner.

Q107: Is homosexuality of any kind Haram?

A. Yes. So far as Islam is concerned, it is not only a capital sin but crime also. Its punishment, according to Islamic Sheriat, is to kill him by sword, or to stone him to death, or to burn him, or to throw him from a high place, or to demolish a wall upon him.

The people to whom Prophet Loot (A.S.) was sent, were indulging in this crime. And lastly they were destroyed because of it.

If two women indulge in this heinous crime, they would be punished by 100 strokes of whip. If they persist in it the punishment will remain the same upto the third conviction. Fourth time they would be killed.

The people of Rass were destroyed by Allah because this crime was prevalent among them.

Q.108: Is masturbation allowed?

A. No — It is strictly prohibited and absolutely unlawful and Haram.

Q.109: Adultery is forbidden, would you mind to write me a verse from the Quran forbidding adultery?

A. "Adultery" and "fornication" are differently used in the English Language; but the Arabic word for both is the same,i.e. زنا (Zina). Two of the Ayats of the Qur'an on this subject are :-

1. "Nor come near the unlawful sexual relation (Zina) for it is a shameful deed and evil, opening the road (to other evils)." (Qur'an, Sura 17,aya 32).
2. "The woman and man guilty of adultery or fornication, flog each of them with hundred strips; let no compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day :and let a party of the Believers witness their punishment." (24:2).

Q. 110: Is it unlawful to read a novel on sexual treatise such as the Famous PERFUMED GARDEN written by Sheikh Nafzaoun translated by Sir Richard Burton?

A. Such books are extremely harmful to a man's physical, psychological and moral health. Remember, your life is moulded according to your thoughts. If you indulge in such so called "books" you will go on thinking like that long after you have finished with that book. Thus, your outlook on life will be governed only by sexual desires; you will look at every passing girl with lustful eyes; and in the words of Nabi Issa (A. S.) "Whosoever looks on a woman with lust has committed adultery with her already in his heart." In this way, the foundation of your morality will be destroyed.

And such thinking creates great tension in your nerves and leads to many infirmities. In short, if you go on thinking like that, your power of manhood will suffer because of the tension; and, as a result, you will find yourself at a loss at the time of marriage.

Q.111:I have been employed a shop where I have to accept orders of delivering wines, write invoices, collect amount due for payment and do correspondence for wines in addition to other commodities for which the Company associates. I would therefore beg for gratuitous information whether to continue the service with a firm dealing with alcoholic commodities as well. I mean to state that the Company deals with many other business commodities including wine (beer) business. Further can I do at least correspondence relating to wine in addition to other work?

A. About your employment: There is no harm in serving a non-Muslim firm. But it is another matter when that service includes transaction of Liquor. Our Holy Prophet has said, "Allah has cursed (Laanat) liquor, and the man who sows the seeds of grapes or grain for that purpose,

and the man who stands guard to that farm; and the man who makes liquor, and the man who drinks it, and the man who serves it to others, and the man who sells it, and the man who buys it, and the man who transports it and the man to whom it is transported, and the man who eats from its price". I hope this Hadith answers your questions.

Q. 112: There are only a few of us Ithna-asheris in Mozambique. All of us are engaged in trade and commerce. Some of us have ration shops. But the difficulty here is that the population drinks liquor very much; and beer and wine is considered a part of grocery. As we, the Ithna-asheris, are not allowed by our religion to sell or keep liquor, we do not get as much business as we could if we kept the liquor. The Ismaitis keep liquor, in their shops, and as a result, their businesses prosper, while ours remain small.

Therefore, I request you to request our Mujtahid to allow us to keep and sell liquor in our shops, so that we may easily compete with other traders.

Recently, I was informed of a very good example of farsightedness of our Mujtahids. I was informed that Agha Seyyid Mohsin al-Hakim had prohibited cow-slaughter in India, to save the lives of the Muslims in that country. Likewise, we know that giving or taking interest is Haram. But the owners of the Habib Bank spend hundreds of thousands rupees in charity and good deeds, and no Mujtahid has ever condemned that money.

Therefore, I am sure that if you put our case properly before our Mujtahid, he will grant our request about liquor business.

A. Your letter dated 19th July, 1971 addressed to the President of the Federation refers. It appears that you have some grave misunderstandings about the role of our Holy Mujtahids. Therefore, I would like to remove those misunderstandings before replying to your main questions.

First of all, the Sheriat of Islam is the most comprehensive sheriat of the world, and it has rules for every conceivable condition, whether we like it or not.

Secondly, in Islamic Sheriat, protecting a Muslim's life is wajib; and, if, for any reason, his life is in danger because of some of the religious practices, the sheriat says that he MUST protect his life and SHOULD forget that religious practice so long as that danger remains. It is called "Taquaiyya" (Protection).

Thirdly, this Taquaiyya is allowed only to protect from danger, not to obtain something or increase the income.

Take for example, the sacrifice of cows in India which you have referred to. First of all, the sacrifice itself is not wajib, it is Sunnat-e-Muwakkada. Secondly, it is not necessary to sacrifice the cow. A goat or sheep can easily be sacrificed instead of cow. Thirdly, the Hindus revere and worship the cow and they are the rulers of the country.

It is generally known that, because of the sacrifice of the cow, Muslims' lives are always in danger in India. According to the rule of sheriat (not by new ruling or opinion of the Mujtahid) that sacrifice would have become Haram (even if it had been Wajib originally).

So, you see, Agha Mohsin Al-Hakeem did not turn a Halal into Haram. He simply explained what was already the rule of the sheriat.

Now, we come to your second example. Taking or giving interest from or to a Muslim is Haram. Here, I will not go into technical detail of what is "Riba" in Shia sheriat. But I should mention here only one thing. Banking is not just taking or giving the interest. There are many

aspects of banking which are perfectly lawful. For example, if you obtain a Letter of Credit from your Bank to purchase a merchandise in Japan, your Bank will pay on your behalf the money in Japan and will get your consignment to Mozambique. Now suppose that the goods were of Shs. 10,000/- and the Bank charged you Shs. 10,500/-. That extra charge of Shs. 500/- is perfectly lawful according to the sheriat, because the Bank conveyed the money on your behalf to Japan and if they charge extra for this service it is alright. They may term it as 'interest' but in sheriat it will not be an interest; it will be a charge in lieu of service.

Another thing to remember is that if a Muslim has two types of income, one lawful and another unlawful, nobody is required to ask whether the money which he has used in purchasing a shirt was from lawful income or the Haram one. It will be supposed to be from Halal income unless it is known to be from 'Haram' income.

A third thing : It is not the duty or function of a Mujtahid or Alim to go and see how a man is behaving or how he is earning his money. His function is to tell that taking 'interest' from Muslims is Haram. It is not his duty to investigate who is taking interest and who is not.

I think now you will understand why the money spent by Habib family on religious matters is not denounced by the Mujtahids. It is because

1. Banking business is not 100% Haram,
2. The particular money spent on a religious purpose is not 'known ' to come from Haram income; and
3. last but not the least, it is not the duty or function of a Mujtahid to speak about individuals.

I think now you will understand why your question can never be replied in your favour. Drinking liquor, or selling it or purchasing it or transporting it or keeping its account, everything is absolutely haram.

Whatever you have said is not like the sacrifice of the cow in India. Taquiayya means seeking protection from a danger. It is not for the purpose of increasing the benefit.

I hope this will remove all your doubts.

Q 113: Is it possible, in any way, for a Muslim to open a Super market (which will have wines, spirits, etc.)?

A. No.

Q.114: Is goat's meat slaughtered by a Jew 'Halal'? I heard that they recite some words before slaughtering it.

A. It is one of the conditions of the validity for Zabiha that it MUST be done by a Muslim. Therefore, the answer to your question is 'NO'

Q.115: Is food prepared by (a) Sunni (b) Ismaili (c) Bohora allowed to be eaten?

A. Yes. (In case of Ismaili, if he believes that Agha Khan is god, then you should not eat the food prepared by him).

Q. 116: I heard from one of my friends that we are allowed to take food prepared by Christian; is this true? and if this is true, I shall try to make you

remember the answer you gave in LIGHT Magazine (Vol. III. No. 1) of Q. 1., that we are permitted to take food prepared by any sect of Islam, conditionally that it is not prepared by someone who associates God with human beings? Do Christians not believe Christ as son of God?

A. So far as the Ahlul-Kitab are concerned, there is a difference of opinion about their Taharat or Najasat. Among our Ulamas, since the beginning, many think that they are Najis like Mushrikeen; others say that originally they are Tahir. Both sides have their proof from the Qur'an and Hadith.

Agha Seyyid Mohsin Hakeem since last 3 or 4 years holds the later view

The details of his Fatwa with my comments are given here for your guidance :-

Following is the translation of the Fatwa of Agha Mohsin Hakim and explanatory notes :-

1. "Tenth (Najasat) : Kafir. And Kafir means a person who either believes in a religion other than Islam or professes to believe in Islam but rejects any of the things which are known to be a part of the religion of Islam.

   "And there is no difference (for this rule of Najasat) between an apostate and born kafir, or between a Harbi and Dhimmi, or between a Kharijite or Ghali or Nasibi.

   "The above rules are for the kafirs other than "Ahlul-kitab". So far as a "Kitabi" is concerned, he is Tahir (clean) in his person, originally; and he becomes Najis because of the "Najasats" which he contacts. Therefore, if he makes his body "tahir" (cleanses it according to the rules of Islamic Sheriat) then the things touched by him are Tahir, and also (in that case) it is allowed to eat from the food prepared by him". (Minhaj-us-Saleheen, Part 1, ed. 1388 A. H.).

2. In a reply to another 'Mas-ala' Agha Saheb wrote that: "But the animal slaughtered by them is not Tahir, and thus cannot be eaten."

3. In a reply to a third Mas-ala he wrote that :-

   "Kitabi" or "Ahlul-Kitab" in this ruling includes the present day's Jews and Christians."

NOTES:

1. According to the above-mentioned Fatwa, if a Jew or Christian makes himself Tahir, according to Islamic Sheriat, a Shia Ithna-Asheri can eat the things touched by him after that Taharat. Also, the clothes washed by him (in that condition) will become pak if he has been taught the rules of Taharat of clothes.

2. According to a basic rule of Islamic Sheriat, "the action of a Muslim is presumed to be correct and conforming to Sheriat, "unless proved otherwise".

   Owing to this rule, we are not supposed to ask a Muslim trader whether the Ghee or Oil sold by him is Tahir? We presume it to be Tahir unless it is known to be Najis.

   But this rule does not apply to a non-Muslim. As the operating phrase in the above-mentioned Fatwa is "if he (the Christian or the Jew) makes his body Tahir", we MUST make sure that he really had made himself Tahir, before touching the food, etc.

3. Coming to the practical side, we can compel a domestic Christian servant to make his body and clothes Tahir before starting the work of the day, and then he may wash our clothes and help in domestic works without any difficulty.

   But, we cannot tell a Christian waiter or a cook in a restaurant to cleanse himself according to our sheriat and also utensils and pots before preparing or serving the food. Therefore, this Fatwa should not be misused by patronizing the Christian or Jewish restaurants and hotels.

4. According to Islamic Sheriat, meat, fat and hide and skin are presumed to be Najis and taken from a dead animal unless known to be taken from an animal slaughtered by a Muslim according to the sheriat.

   Agha Saheb has clearly written that the Zabiha of Christian or Jew is Najis and not allowed; a Shia Ithna-Asheri cannot use any of the food prepared by the Christians or Jews if that food contains meat or animal rat.

Also, everything made by them from leather (like belts, shoes, straps, purses, hat linings, etc., etc.) are Najis and will be treated as made from the hide of a dead animal."

Q. 117: Do the Muslims modify such rules like eating meat that a non-moslem has slaughtered?

A. There is no question of modifying the rule concerning the meat of the animal slaughtered by a non-Muslim.

For your information, Muslim Sheriat contains 5 kinds of rules:

1. WAJIB: The religious duties performance of which is rewarded and neglect of which is punishable are classified as WAJIB.
2. HARAM : Deeds, doing of which is sinful and punishable and abstinence from them rewardable, are termed as HARAM.
3. MUSTAHAB OR SUNNAT: Such of the rites performance of which is rewardable but their ommission is not punishable are termed as SUNNAT.
4. MAKROOH; Those deeds, abstinence from which is rewarded, but committing them is not sinful are termed as MAKROOH.
5. MUBAH : Those deeds which are allowed by the Sheriat, but there is neither reward nor punishment for doing or neglecting them, are called MUBAH.

A Muslim is at liberty to ignore the rule (3) and (4) even without any excuse. But he cannot tamper with a Wajib or Haram. The rule forbidding the meat of an animal slaughtered by a non-Muslim is within this latter category. Therefore, there is no choice for any Muslim in this respect.

Q. 118: Why don't you like to touch dogs; And eat the meat of pigs and some other animals?

A.

(a) About the meat of pigs, please see the article "Dangers of eating Pork" in the issue of LIGHT which is being sent to you (Now see the book "Pork" available from the Mission free of charge).

(b) After that, we will publish another article about dogs which please wait.

(c) About the other animals: All the animals which are forbidden in Islam are of such nature that they inflict harm to the eater; that harm may be either physical or spiritual or both. For example, we are not allowed to eat meat of beasts of prey (like eagle, kite, etc.) because they create brutality in the nature of the eater (spiritual harm) or the carcass of even lawful animals if they are not slaughtered according to the Islamic Law, because the blood which invariably congeals in the dead-body of such animals is harmful to the health (physical harm).

Q. 119: Can a Muslim eat a hen or poultry?

A. Yes, A Muslim is allowed to eat hen or poultry. It must be killed according to the rules.

Q. 120: Can indoor games, e.g. ludo, cards, chess, etc. be played (with the intention of time-passing) without introducing money?

A. Such games which are usually played for gambling (example of which are contained in your question) cannot be played even without introducing the element of money. Other games, which are not played for gambling, and outdoor games (without any condition that the loser would pay some thing to the winner) are allowed. But it has been highly emphasized that only such games should be played which help in maintaining the health of the body. Thus, it is advisable that you should refrain from all indoor games.

There is no harm if a third party gives reward or prize to the winner in outdoor games.

Q.121:For a man to keep Beard is wajib according to our sheriet. What benefit one derives by keeping Beard and when it grows after a certain length, it is not advisable, why?

A. Beard: Beard has been made wajib for a Muslim because :-

(a) It is a grace and beauty for males. If you look even at the animals you will find cocks having some beautiful feathers on neck and head which are missing in the hens. Look at the peacocks, pigeons, lions and other animals and you will find that males are more beautiful than females, thanks to the extra feather or mane resembling the beard in mankind.
If a man shaves his beard he in fact deprives himself of the real and natural beauty.

(b) There is a close connection between cheeks, teeth and eyes. Any strain on the cheeks affects the optic nerves. Thus, shaving the beard puts strain on eye nerves, and the eyes gradually lose their power.
The increasing number of teenagers who are obliged to wear spectacles is enough to show the relation.

Length of Beard: Jews used to keep long beards like Sikhs. Parsees used to shave their beards. Therefore, the Holy Prophet ordained that the Muslims should not shave their beards, otherwise they would be mistaken for Parsees, nor should they leave it to grow untrimmed thus resembling the Jews. Moreover trimming the beard keeps the appearance clean and nice to look upon.

It is for reason of cleanliness that the Muslims have been ordered to trim their moustache, otherwise, the hair would touch the water and food and would be quite unhygienic and sometimes revolting to look at.

Hair growing in other places like armpits and below navel has been ordained to be shaved quite regularly for the same purpose. It is strange to see that the Christians and many Westernised people shave their beard and grow the hair of armpit and below navel. Is it not unhygienic, disgusting and revolting?

Q. 122: I refer to your reply in latest "LIGHT" why Beard? It could be assumed by your reply that all those who shave may have weak eyes and those who do not shave may have bright eyes — then why Dear Mr. Rizvi you having never shaved in your life have to wear spectacles?

A. Well, first of all, am I a "teenager"? Secondly, have I said that shaving is the only cause of weak eyesight? Read the answer again before jumping to the conclusions.

And just for your information, the observation that "any strain on the cheeks affects the optic nerves" is not a rhetoric. It is based on medical findings.

Q 123: What does 786/110 mean?

A. '786' is the total of the numerical values of the alphabets of بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم and '110' is the total value of the alphabets of علی

Below is the list of the alphabets with their numerical values:

ا	ب	ج	د	ه	و	ز	ح	ط	ي	ك	ل	م	ن
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	20	30	40	50

س	ع	ف	ص	ق	ر	ش	ت	ث	خ	ذ	ض	ظ	غ
60	70	80	90	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000

Now see for example:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

ب	س	م	ا	ل	ل	ه	ا	ل	ر	ح	م	ن	ا	ل	ر	ح	ي	م	
2	60	40	1	30	30	5	1	30	200	8	40	50	1	30	200	8	10	40	=786

مُحمّد

م	ح	م	د	
40	8	40	4	=92

علی

ع	ل	ي	
70	30	10	=110

Q124: Can anyone believing in God be affected by witch-craft? Do we have to recite Al-Falaq and An-Nas to be clear from witch-craft?

A: - Only the people with weak psychology are affected by such things. As the belief in Allah assures a man that nothing can harm him without the will of Allah, he is not affected by witchcraft. If anyone is perturbed that someone may try to harm him through magic or witchcraft, the two suras mentioned by should be recited for protection. These suras remind Mumin that Allah is the protector and Guardian against ill-wishers and witches, and thus strengthening his belief in Allah and make him immune from ill-effects of witch-crafts etc.

Q125: Is Smoking bad in Islam? Why is it Makruh?

A: - Smoking is neither Haram nor Makruh. But in our society it is considered a sign of disrespect to smoke in the presence of elders; and on the whole is discouraged because of its harming effects on the health.

Q126: Is it allowed for a muslim to smoke in the lavatory of the Mosque?

A: - Smoking is neither Haram nor Makruh and there is no objection in to smoking in the lavatory of the Mosque. But remember that smoking in itself is harmful to health.

Q127: In checking the Holy Qur'anic verses purporting to taking of Liquor to be haram (unauthorized, sinful) is said that 'it (taking of liquor) has more vices than virtue? If yes then why smoking of tobacco, which has all the vices is allowed among the shias?

A: - There is a difference between 'being allowed' and 'not being disallowed' The first is a positive aspect while the second is a negative one. As in Sheriat Wajib and Haram cannot be tampered with, we can not add to this list of Haram things

Q128: Do we believe in the Astrologer and the palmistry?

A: - Islam does not allow such practices; and anybody relying on such forecasts is termed as 'non-believer'

Q129: Is there any written proof that animals were created to be eaten? Aren't men animals? They are animals which man is given to them as a name''.

A: - Here is an Ayat of the Qur'an: -

'Lawful unto you for food are all four-footed animals, with the exception named: but nothing of animals are allowed to you while you are in the sacred boundry and of the pilgrim garb……… ………but when you are clear of the sacred boundry and of the pilgrim garb, then you may hunt.

About fish: 'Lawful to you is the pursuit of water animals and use for food''. (Quran, Sura 5,aya 99)

There are many ayats on this subject in the Quran. And such commands may easily be found in the scriptures of Jews, Christians and Hindus.

Q130: How do Muslims count their years? E.g. When Muhammad did migrate to Medina it was 622 A.D.

A: - The Muslim calendar is a lunar one, the months beginning at the sight of the new moon or if not sighted, at the expiry of 30 days of the previous month. Thus the moon are of 29 or 30 days. A year generally consists of about 355 days. It means that the Muslim year is shorter than the present Gregorian calendar (which is erroneously called Christian Era) by about 10 days. The difference amounts to about one year in 34 or 35 years.

The Hijra (Flight to Medina) was in 622 A.D. And that is the beginning point of the Muslim Era. According to the Gregorian calendar 1348 years have passed out but, owing to the difference mentioned above, it is 1389 of Muslim Era.

Q131: Why is it said that a Muslim cannot enslave his brother Muslim in some books; but also in some books we find the Muslims having slaving whom also they pray in Mosque together?

A. Here I should explain to you that Islam launched a three-pronged attack on slavery: -

Prior to Islam, slavery was practiced with abandunce. Debtors were made slaves. War captives were either killed or made slaves. In weaker nations, people were hunted like animals, killed or captured and reduced to slavery.

Islam, not in ambiguous terms, forbade its followers to enslave people on any pretext. The only exception was an unbeliever enemy captured in a war which was fought in self-defense or with the permission of the Prophet or Imam. This exception was, in words of Justice Ameer Ali, 'in order to serve as a guarantee for the preservation of the lives of the captives'.

Not only that. An alternative was also introduced and enforced: 'To let them go free, either with or without any ransom'.

In the battles forced upon Muslims, the prophet had ordered very humane treatment of the prisoners who fell into the hands of Muslims. And, as mentioned above, they could obtain their freedom on payment of small sums of money, and many of them were let off without any payment. It all depended upon the discretion of the prophet or Imam, keeping in view the safety of the Muslims and the extent of danger from the enemy. The captives of the very first Islamic battle, Badr, were freed on ransom, while those of the tribe of Tai were freed without any ransom.

The Prophet and the 1st Imam Ali (a.s) prescribed severest penalties for anyone who took a freeman into slavery. This was a crime whose penalty was cutting off the hand of the culprit.

Justice Ameer Ali writes in Mohammadan Law, (Vol.2, p.31-32 : -)

"The possession of a slave by the Qur'anic Laws was conditional on a bonafide war, waged in self-defense, against idolatrous enemies; and it was permitted in order to serve as a gurantee for the preservation of the lives of the captives………Muhammad found the custom existing among the pagan Arabs; he minimized the evil, at the same time laid down such strict rules that but for the perversity of his followers, slavery as a social institution would have ceased to exist with the discontinuance of the wars in which the Moslem nation were at first involved".

As the enslavement was restricted and only captives in a bonafide war against idolatrous enemies could be made slaves, it is quite right to say that Muslims could not enslave Muslims.

The second front of the attack against 'SLAVERY' was the active campaign to get freedom for the slaves.

The third front of the attack was the restoration of the dignity of slaves and enhancing their social status. Islam made no distinction between a slave and a freeman and all were treated with equality.

If, a non-muslim slave accepted Islam, the master was strongly exhorted to give him freedom- but it was not compulsory. However, many Muslims used to emancipate such slaves at once; but even if that slave was not emancipated at once, he enjoyed full rights in the household of his master.

A book on slavery has been printed just now; and is available from this mission.